

Grammaticalization of time adverbials in Liko (D.201)

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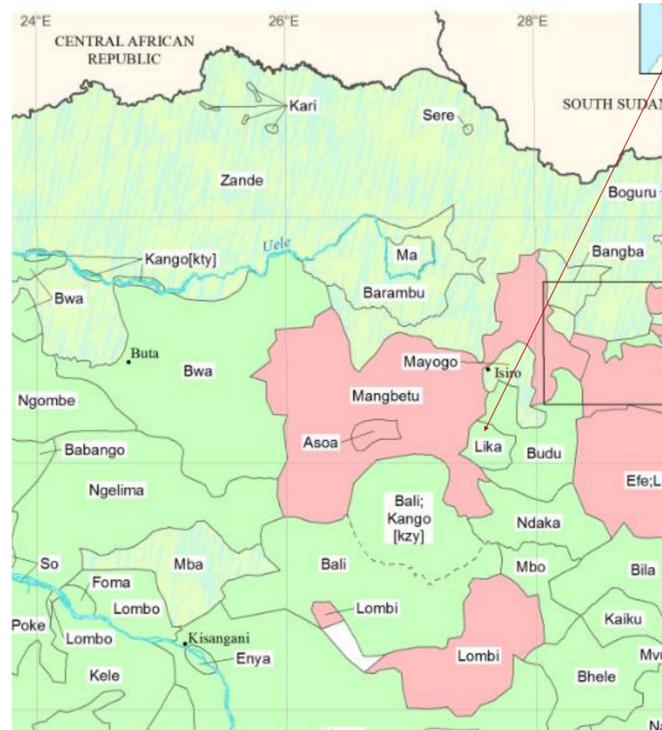


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1 Introduction and Research Question



Liko (*Ethnologue Lika*) is the name of one of the languages in the Oriental Province in the north-eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Liko is spoken by about 68,000 people. First publication in the language in 2006.

Language Families
 Adamawa-Ubangi
 Bantu
 Nilo-Saharan

Figure 1: Language map of the Liko language area¹

"One of the most conspicuous lines of grammaticalization to be observed in African languages can be seen in the constant growth of new forms for tense, aspect, and modality." (Heine, 2011:702).

In Liko, reference to past and future locations in time is encoded by distinctive prefixal tone on the verb, compare examples (2.1) and (2.2).

In addition to tone, the language has a grammatical system that is linked to but separate from the verb and expresses only tense, no aspect nor other related categories. Five post-verbal time adverbials refer to different locations in time. Three of these adverbials are disyllabic, whereas two are, at least at the surface, monosyllabic and induce phonological changes.

The question this poster aims to answer is, whether (at least) the two monosyllabic time adverbials have been subject to grammaticalization.

2 Time Reference to Past and Future

- (2.1) ná-kpukul-a 1SG^P-rub-FV 'I rubbed'
 (2.2) na-kpukul-a 1SG-rub-FV 'I will rub'
 (2.3) ná-ká-kpukúl-á=gu 1SG-NEG-rub-FV^P=NEG 'I did not rub'
 (2.4) ná-ká-kpukul-ı=gu 1SG-NEG-rub-FV=NEG 'I will not rub'

3 Time Adverbials

The time adverbials in Liko referring to the Past are ^Hfi, ndóku and ^Hndi, and the ones referring to the Future are bánu and ndéke.

Past			Future		
←	one week ago	earlier in the past	coming week	two weeks ahead	later in the future →
^H ndi	ndóku	^H fi		bánu	ndéke

Figure 2: Liko time adverbials in Past and Future

- (3.1)a. mu-nyönyo kãmi ú-búkút-a ndóku 6o-bígi
 b. mu-nyönyo kãmi u-búkút-a bánu 6o-bígi
 c. mu-nyönyo kãmi u-búkút-a ndéke 6o-bígi
 1-sister-in-law 1SG.POSS 3SG^P/3SG:1.O-produce-FV P₂/F₂/F₃ 2-twin
 'My sister-in-law gave / will give birth to twins.'

- d. mu-nyönyo kãmi ú-búkút-ǒ=fi 6o-bígi
 e. mu-nyönyo kãmi ú-búkút-ǎ=ndi 6o-bígi
 3SG^P:1.O-produce-FV=P₁/P₃
 'My sister-in-law gave birth to twins.'

- (3.2)a. bugwákı ó-pik-o ndóku ndábu yí-dingĩ
 b. bugwákı o-pik-o bánu ndábu yí-dingĩ
 c. bugwákı o-pik-o ndéke ndábu yí-dingĩ
 1a.uncle:3SG.POSS 3SG^P/3SG-build-FV P₂/F₂/F₃ 9.house 9.ADJ-big
 'His (maternal) uncle built / will build the big house.'

- d. bugwákı ó-pik-ǒ=fi ndábu yí-dingĩ
 e. bugwákı ó-pik-ǎ=ndi ndábu yí-dingĩ
 3SG^P-build-FV=P₁/P₃
 'His (maternal) uncle built the big house.'

- (3.3)a. 6o-mbũ 6ó-pik-ag-ǎ=ndi 6a-ndábu na 6e-nvunvú
 2-bird 3PL-build-PLUR-FV=P₃ 2+9-house with 2+9:9a-moss
 'Birds built houses (i.e. nests) with moss.'

- (3.4)b. ná-kúgw-ag-ǒ=fi pulú
 1SG^P-scream-PLUR-FV=P₁ hard
 'I screamed very hard.'

- (3.5)a. mu-kó ø-kó-zuzúk-á=gũ=ndi
 1-woman 3SG^P-NEG-get up-FV=NEG=P₃
 'The woman did not get up.'

- b. mu-kó ø-kó-zuzúk-á=gu gutógũ=ndi
 1-woman 3SG^P-NEG-get up-FV=NEG even=P₃
 'The woman did not even get up.'

- (3.6) a. gutógũ=fi bí-nza ká-ik-ó nyamá wo-tutú
 3SG:be even=P₁ MOD-good INF-be-FV 1a.animal 1.ass-9.forest
 'It was even good to be a wild animal.'

4 Word Order

The canonical word order in Liko is S V O₁ O₂ (X_n). "S" is subject, "O₁" is first object, "O₂" is second object and "X" is adjunct. Temporal adjuncts occur in clause positions following any objects or as external topics, left adjoined to the clause.

The five time adverbials of section 3 obligatory occur post-verbally and preceding any objects. One time adverbial, ndéfi, still has its lexical meaning, i.e. 'long ago'. It cannot precede an object and only occurs together with the time adverbial ^Hndi.

5 Analysis

The five time adverbials in Liko, ^Hfi, ndóku, ^Hndi, bánu and ndéke, occur in a position in the clause which is not accessible for temporal adjuncts. This marks them off as having a grammatical function.

The tonal change, from L to LH, on the verbal or adverbial element preceding ^Hfi and ^Hndi gives evidence that these time adverbials should be analyzed as having an initial floating High tone and as being disyllabic like the other three time adverbials. The shape of the first syllable cannot yet be established. As for ^Hndi, the form fi-ndi 'a long period of time' exists, with the general modifier prefix fi-. Nurse (2008:106) mentions that "D12-13-14 all have traces of /(o)bi/ (...) at post-FV, (...) referring to hesternal and deriving from an adverb meaning 'yesterday'." In my data, there is no indication that these time adverbials had meanings like 'tomorrow', 'yesterday', 'front', 'back', 'near', 'far', etc.

Both High tone linking and [+ATR] assimilation or the creation of a [-ATR] domain indicate that ^Hfi and ^Hndi should be analysed as an enclitic to the preceding verb form or adverbial. Interestingly, instead of assimilating to the [ATR] quality of the verb, they impact the phonetic-phonological structure of the verb.

Of the four parameters of grammaticalization proposed by Heine (2011:697), the last three apply: desemanticization, i.e. loss or generalization in meaning content, decategorialization, i.e. loss in morphosyntactic properties characteristic of lexical or other less grammaticalized forms, and erosion, i.e. loss of phonetic substance. If Heine's ordering reflects the diachronic sequence in Liko, then the first parameter, extension, has applied as well.

6 Conclusion

Sources of inflectional morphemes in Bantu are typically structures involving auxiliary verbs or non-inflecting particles. Bantu post-final elements are mostly derived from pronominal enclitics. Liko shows another type of post-final elements as sources for grammaticalization. All post-verbal time adverbials ^Hfi, ndóku, ^Hndi, bánu and ndéke have been subject to grammaticalization.

¹Lewis M.P. et al. 2014. *Ethnologue: Languages of the World, Seventeenth edition*. Used by permission

The cooperation of Jean-Pierre Kamenabake, André Ndagba, Rigobert Ndimo (Liko speakers) and the review comments of Oliver Stegen (SIL) are gratefully acknowledged.