6 April 2011: Last week, the organizers of WOCAL7-Buea announced a workshop on post-verbal negation in African languages. This workshop is to take place within the frame of WOCAL7, which will be held in Buea, Cameroon from August 20 to August 24, 2012. All abstracts should be directed to the organizers of the workshop, Maud Devos and Dmitri Idiatov (maud.devos@africamuseum.be).

The history of post-verbal negation in African languages

Workshop to be organized by Maud Devos (Royal Museum for Central Africa) and Dmitri Idiatov (LLACAN du CNRS)

Notwithstanding a cross-linguistic tendency for negative markers to occur before the verb (Dryer 1988) there is an area in Africa where post-verbal negative markers abound. Following Dryer (2009:307) this area “stretches from Nigeria across to the Central African Republic and down into the northern Democratic Republic of the Congo”. This region overlaps with the “hotbed” of a large linguistic area referred to by Güldemann (2008) as the Macro-Sudan belt. The proposed workshop aims at a better understanding of the typologically unusual phenomenon of post-verbal negative markers and its history in the African context. We invite papers that take a closer look at post-verbal negative markers in African languages (within and beyond the area described above) and contribute to one of the following topics (or another topic relevant to post-verbal negation):

1. The position of the post-verbal negative marker: In the area identified by Dryer the post-verbal negative markers typically occur “at the end of the clause, following any adverbs or adjunct phrases” (Dryer 2009:307). Outside the area the position of the post-verbal negative marker shows more variation. Data, mostly from Bantu languages, show that the post-verbal negative marker may also occur immediately after the verb (Devos et al. 2010), or that (pragmatically motivated) variation is possible (Odden 1996, Philippson & Nurse 2000).

2. The etymology of the post-verbal negative marker: What is the source of the post-verbal negative marker and especially are non-negative source meanings as
suggested for Metta (Grassfields Bantu, Mihas 2009), Senufo (Gur, Carlson 1994), Ma (Adamawa-Ubangi, Tucker and Bryan 1966) and a number of Bantu languages (Devos & van der Auwera forthcoming) a recurrent phenomenon?

3. Post-verbal negative markers and “Jespersen Cycles”: For Bantu languages it has been suggested that post-verbal negative markers were originally used to reinforce negation and a fair number of Bantu languages display double, even triple negation. How valid is the Jespersen Cycle as a historical explanation for post-verbal negative markers in Africa and how recurrent is triple negation (involving post-verbal negative markers)?

4. Post-verbal negative markers and language contact: Following Güldemann (2008) post-verbal negation, more precisely the V-O-Neg word order pattern, is one of the linguistic features relevant for the Macro-Sudan belt. How does such a pattern diffuse? Nurse (2008:180) notes that some of the post-verbal negative markers in Bantu languages are Wanderwörter; they are easily transferred from one language to another. Do we find clear cases of borrowed post-verbal negative markers or is contact-induced grammaticalization (Beyer 2009) a more plausible scenario?

5. Stability of post-verbal negative markers: Can post-verbal negative markers be reconstructed for any significant time-depth, such as the level of a proto-family or a major branch of a family?

References:


Colloquium on African Language and Linguistics (CALL 2011)

Dear colleague,

It is our pleasure to invite you to the 41st COLLOQUIUM ON AFRICAN LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS to be held in Leiden on 29-31 August, 2011.

Papers and research reports on all aspects of African languages and linguistics are welcome. We shall allow 30 minutes for the presentation of each paper, including (10 minutes) discussion.

Please register before June 1st, 2011, by answering the questions below. We just need your title; since there is no selection, we do not need an abstract. We shall confirm your registration and provide more detailed information in our second circular which we shall send to you early in July.

The meetings will be held from Monday morning through Wednesday afternoon. The registration fee is €15 (students €10). We suggest you try to book your own accommodation. You can find suitable addresses at the following website: http://www.vvvleiden.nl/en/accommodations/. Let us know if you need any help. If you need an official letter of acceptance of your participation, just ask us. If you need a visa to enter the Netherlands, please start procedures well ahead of time. Unfortunately it is impossible for us to provide financial assistance.

This invitation is sent to participants of recent CALL's and to some other addresses. Please share this information with interested colleagues and students at your institution. The CALL website will be updated regularly with more information, see: http://www.hum.leiden.edu/lucl/research/conferences/upcoming-conferences/call-2011.html

In the same week as CALL 2011 the ‘Nuba Mountain Conference’ will be organized. For more information on this conference, see: http://www.hum.leiden.edu/lucl/research/conferences/upcoming-conferences/nuba-mountain-conference.html.

Hoping to hear from you and to see you at our Colloquium.

Yours sincerely,
Maarten Mous
African Linguistics School (ALS) 2011

Dear all, As you may know, the African Linguistics School (ALS) 2011 is taking place this year in Benin (Porto-Novo). For those of you who don't know this school, our aims are very simple: bring African students together and expose them to formal linguistics. All the students have to do is to apply and if selected they may receive a travel subsidy to the venue. Accommodation and food are free for everyone.

This email is to inform you that the deadline has just been extended to March 15th. Please encourage your students to apply and please circulate this message.

You can visit our webpage for more information: [http://www.als.rutgers.edu/](http://www.als.rutgers.edu/)

Best,
Enoch

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Berlin Bantu Conference (B4ntu)

Special theme: Historical Bantu Linguistics, 7-9 April 2011

Held at the Seminar für Afrikawissenschaften, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. Conference Website (from 31 March 2010): http://www2.hu-berlin.de/b4ntu/

The Fourth International Conference on Bantu Languages brings together specialists in all aspects of the study of Bantu languages. Abstracts are invited for conference presentations addressing any aspects of the analysis, description or comparison of Bantu languages. We especially welcome contributions on the conference theme, Historical Bantu Linguistics.

The B4ntu in Berlin conference website has been updated. You can now find a preliminary program. Accommodation about hotels near the conference venue has also been posted on the conference website. There is no registration fee for the conference but we ask you to register online if you are interested in attending: http://b4ntu.hu-berlin.de/

We look forward to welcoming you to Berlin. -B4ntu organizers