

Grammaticalization and prohibitive constructions in Bantu

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Prohibitives, as the term is used in this paper, are appeals of the speaker to the addressee(s) not to do something. Most Bantu languages have more than one way to express a prohibitive meaning. The paper sets out by giving a typology of prohibitive constructions in Bantu based on a sample of about 200 languages. A distinction is made between constructions that are fully dedicated to the expression of prohibition and constructions that have prohibition as one of their possible and conventionalized meanings. I consider the prohibitive meaning to be conventionalized when a second person form is most frequently used to express prohibition. The first type of prohibitive construction includes verb forms consisting of a negative marker affixed to an Imperative.

- (1) Mpongwe (de Gauthier 1912)
a-yena
 NEG-see.IMP
 Don't see!

Although this would appear to be the most straightforward way to form a prohibitive, negative Imperatives are as rare in Bantu languages as they are in the world's languages (Kamba Muzenga 1981, van der Auwera et al 2005). More frequently occurring constructions that are fully dedicated to the expression of prohibition are auxiliary constructions and Infinitives with a specialized negative marker. The auxiliary verbs typically have a negative lexical meaning (to leave, to stop, to refuse) but verbs expressing 'to come', 'to love', 'to know', 'to be', 'to remain', 'to fear' are also used.

The second type of prohibitive construction includes negative Subjunctives and negative indicative verb forms. The grammaticalization of the prohibitive meaning with the negative Subjunctive often has a formal correlate: the negative Subjunctive starts to look more like a typical affirmative Imperative. It either loses its second person subject concord (2) or the second person plural forms acquire a redundant plurality marker typical for second person plural Imperatives (3) giving rise to synchronically hybrid forms.

- (2) Swahili (Sacleux 1909)
si-lal-e ... **a-si-lal-e** **lal-a**
 NEG-sleep-SUBJ ... 2-NEG-sleep-SUBJ sleep-IMP
 Don't sleep! ... so they do not sleep Sleep!
- (3) Shangaji
mu-si-ki-ov-e-ni **ki-ov-e-ni**
 2pl-NEG-1sg-fear-SUBJ-PL 1sg-fear-IMP-PL
 Do not fear me! Fear me!

I argue that these changes are due to analogy with the Imperative, thus presenting an example of analogy enhancing grammaticalization. The grammaticalization of the prohibitive meaning with indicative verb forms shows the development of an objective construction directly into an intersubjective construction (contrary to Traugott, 2003). In the example below the negative Narrative tense is used to express prohibition.

- (4) Shi (Polak-Bynon 1975)
u-ta-shakud-ag-a

2sg-Neg-pound-EMPH-NARR
Don't pound!

The paper ends by examining some remarkable grammaticalization patterns in more detail. Because of their exceptional nature they may not be very important from a typological point of view but they are so for theories of grammaticalization in that they exemplify rare paths of semantic change (Pakendorf and Schalley 2005). In Kinga a form identical to the affirmative Future tense is used to express prohibition.

- (5) Kinga (Wolff 1905)
u-la-tov-a^g-a
2sg-FUT-hit-CONT-FUT
Don't hit!

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