

## From anaphoric pronoun to copula in Zande\*

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### 1. Introduction

In Zande there is a particle *ni* which has two syntactic functions. The first one is that of an anaphoric pronoun (cf. ex. 1. for its use as a possessive pronoun) which is neutral with regard to gender, number, and syntactic function. The second function is that of a copula (ex. 2. and 3.). My hypothesis is that this copula has developed in a process of grammaticalisation from the anaphoric pronoun. The aim of the present paper is to outline this development and the conditions which allowed for it to take place.

1. *Ture ki-ya fu-ko ... na-i a-ya fu-ru,*  
 T. SEQ-say for-3m mother-LOG.1 III-say for-LOG.2  
*u a-bi boro kpu-ni sende yo, ...*  
 LOG.s1 III-see person home-ANAPH ground there

'Then Ture<sub>i</sub> told him<sub>ii</sub> that ... his<sub>i</sub> mother had told him<sub>i</sub> should he<sub>i</sub> see a man whose home was underground ...' (GORE 1926:132)

2. *nzunzu-ngua ni rugurugu-he rogo siani.*  
 fruit-tree COP straighten.up.RED-INAN.2 inside plate

'The fruit (of a tree) is in an upright position on the plate.'

3. *gi kubaya re ni ba-wene hihi-he.*  
 DEF.P cup DEM COP MAX-nice fill.RED-INAN.2

'This cup is nicely full.'

The development of non-verbal copulas from personal or demonstrative<sup>1</sup> pronouns has been a topic of investigation with regard to Chinese and Arabic by the latest since 1977 and 1983 respectively. With regard to African languages, however, it appears that this grammaticalisation path has been overlooked for quite some time, although the phenomenon has been described quite clearly in several languages. SCHNEIDER-BLUM (2007:57-62), e.g. quite cautiously speaks only of the copula-function of the demonstrative clitic in Alaaba, but does not consider it a result of grammaticalisation, despite some pieces of evidence. With regard to interrogative clauses in Mundu, SANTANDREA (1969:149) says quite clearly that in interrogative sentences the demonstrative *ne* replaces the copula. And TUCKER (1994<sup>2</sup>:308) observes in Kenyan Luo that "a third person pronoun may optionally be used as a copula".

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<sup>1</sup> According to STASSEN (1997), next to verbs pronouns are the most frequent origins of copulas.

<sup>2</sup> This grammar was published posthumous. Chet Creider, the editor, says in the introduction that A.N. Tucker (\*1904 - †1980) "laboured on the preparation of this grammar of Dholuo from about 1960 until 1980. Between

In the past few years the situation has changed. PUSTET (2005) assumes that homonymies between copulas and pronouns are indicators of such grammaticalisation processes, and she points out homonymies of this type in four African languages: Nuer, Logbara, Kenya Luo and the closely related Lango. GREEN (n.d.:3ff) discusses the grammaticalisation of pronouns into copulas with regard to Hausa. And this is what I intend to do in the present paper with regard to Zande.

Zande is an Ubangian language spoken by about a million speakers originally mainly in the triangle Sudan, CAR and DR Congo, but there are also large groups of Zande in the urban centres of these countries, in neighbouring countries and in oversea diasporas. The language is fairly well documented. There are a number of general grammatical descriptions (GORE 1926; TUCKER 1959; BOYD 1980) and of specialized studies (CLAUDI 1985; BOYD 1995; 1998; PASCH 2007, 2011).

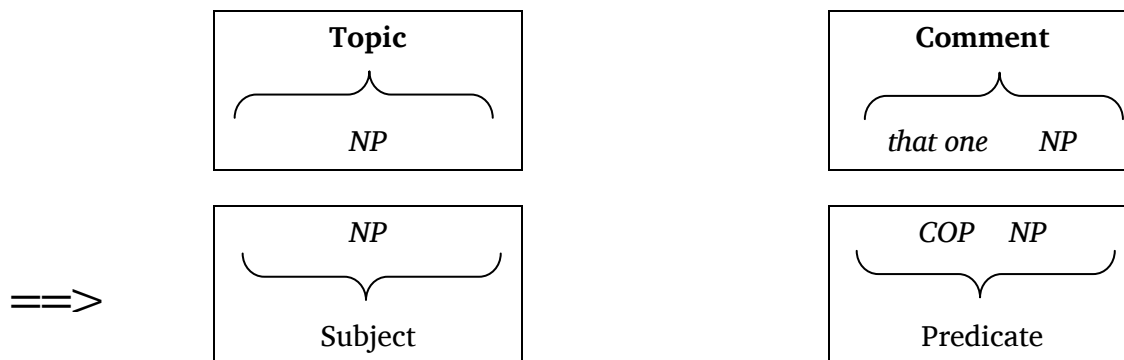
Zande has the syllable structure [CV]C(w)V and both lexical and grammatical tone. The usual word order is SVO, only the identification copula *du* (see ch. 4) causing an inversion (BOYD 1998:40). Syntactic function is only marked on pronouns with the exception of those of masculine and feminine gender. Zande has a four-gender system marked only on pronouns of the 3<sup>rd</sup> person. The language is isolating with agglutinative features. Grammatical relations are defined by the order of constituents, only certain pronouns being marked for syntactic function (see below Table 1). Other relations are indicated by prepositions or adverbs. Zande has a rich system of tense and aspect marking prefixes; furthermore most verbs distinguish two stems, a perfective and an imperfective one.

This paper is organized as follows. In chapter 2 the grammaticalisation of pronouns into copulas is discussed quite generally. Chapter 3 gives a short introduction into Zande, with focus on the personal pronouns, and chapter 4 presents the different types of copular-clauses. The functions of the anaphoric pronoun *ni* are discussed in chapter 5, delineating the differences in the usage of the personal pronouns and *ni*. Chapter 6 deals with secondary predicates, introduced by *ni*, and the conditions for the categorical change of the anaphoric pronoun *ni* to become copula. Conclusions are drawn in chapter 7.

## 2. On the grammaticalisation of pronouns into copulas

The first model of how the development of pronouns into copula takes place has been developed by LI and THOMPSON (1977:419ff). They assume that the grammaticalisation of a pronoun into a copula in Chinese is the result of a syntactic reanalysis of a topic construction: "the subject pronoun which is co-referential with the topic in the comment of a topic comment construction is re-analysed as a copula morpheme in a subject predicate construction." They illustrate this by the Graph 1.

Graph 1:



EID (1983) discusses the copula function of personal pronouns in Arabic and Hebrew. While in their pronominal function pronouns agree with their antecedents in gender, number and person as shown in example (4), they need not agree in person in their copular function. This becomes evident in examples (5.a) and (5.b).

4. *il-bint hiyya l-mas'u:l-a.*  
 DEF-girl she DEF-responsible-FEM.SG  
 'The girl is the one responsible.'

- 5.a *‘ana huwwa l-mas’u:l*  
 1s he DEF-responsible  
 ‘I am the [male] one responsible.’
- 5.b *‘ana hiyya l-mas’u:l-a*  
 1s she DEF-responsible-FEM  
 ‘I am the [female] one responsible.’

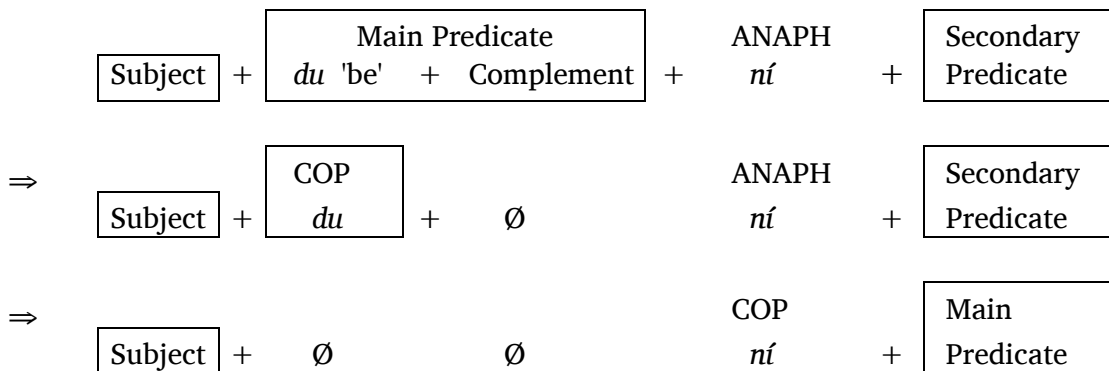
KATZ (1996:2, cit. in CHANG 2006:144) develops the hypothesis that there is a grammaticalisation pathway from pronoun to copula, and another pathway from copula to pronoun, indicating that grammaticalisation need not be unidirectional (cf. HEINE & REH 1984:72-74; HEINE, CLAUDI & HÜNNEMEIER 1991:246). She outlines the full cycle displayed in Hebrew: Pre-Proto-Semitic to Biblical Hebrew has copula to pronoun, and the same pronoun is becoming a copula again in Modern Hebrew.

Katz' explanation is that the third person anaphora can be seen as related to the predication of existence, since copulas and pronouns code the same basic concept of "existence in time and space". They do so, however, under different grammatical guises, the first more verbally, the latter more nominally. When the surrounding linguistic material regroups, the same morpheme "a being" may be used to express the act of "being" and vice versa. As for why copulas and third person pronouns code the same basic concept of existence in time and space, KATZ (1996:30-31) states that first and second person pronouns refer to situationally salient participants, while third person pronouns require a greater level of abstraction. When referring to a third person participant in discourse, speakers are in fact also presupposing the existence of such a participant. Thus, third person anaphora are cognitively related to a predication of existence. "The copula is the most empty of all verbs semantically, since it merely states the existence of a specified pseudo-logical relationship between A and B, and there are no event contours" (cit. in CHANG 2006:145).

This paper is primarily based on the ideas developed by Aya KATZ (1996) although the grammaticalisation pattern differs in some respects. While in the Semitic languages it is the pronoun of simplex identificational clauses preceding the main predicate that has been reanalysed as a copula, in Zande it is the background marking anaphoric pronoun *ni* that has undergone such process.

Constructions with the copula verb *du* 'be present' as a semantically empty main predicate – which is followed by the anaphoric pronoun *ni* introducing a depictive secondary predicate – are likely to be the bridging context constructions where the syntactic reanalysis and the category change of *ni* has taken place. Graph 2 presents an illustration of this process.

Graph 2:



### 3. Personal pronouns

Zande has two series of personal pronouns. The pronouns of the first series serve – with some exceptions (cf. PASCH 2011) – as subjects and those of the second series again with some exceptions – as direct objects and possessive pronouns. In order to clearly distinguish the two categories graphically the pronouns of the first series are written as separate words, while those of the second series are written as suffixes.

The personal pronouns exhibit the best known feature of Zande: its four-gender system which is only marked for the pronouns of the 3<sup>rd</sup> person (see Table 1). The genders are MASCULINE, FEMININE (both are basically restricted to adult persons), ANIMATE (-HUMAN), and INANIMATE. The ANIMATE gender is usually referred to as 'animal' or – in German publications – 'Tier'. 'Animal' is, however, not considered an ideal denomination, all the less since dead animals do not belong there (see ex. 23) while numerous inanimate objects and even children do (LAGAE 1920:152; GORE 1926:21f; CLAUDI 1985:114-119). For this reason it is preferred to call this gender animate with the connotation -human.

Table 1: Personal pronouns

		Series 1		Series 2	
		Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
1		<i>mi</i>	<i>ani</i>	<i>-re</i>	<i>-rani</i>
2		<i>mo</i>	<i>oni</i>	<i>-ro</i>	<i>-roni</i>
3 m	+HUM	<i>ko</i>	<i>yo, i</i>	<i>-ko</i>	<i>-yo</i>
3 f		<i>ri</i>		<i>-ri</i>	
3 AN	-HUM	<i>(h)u</i>	<i>ami</i>	<i>-ru</i>	<i>-ra</i>
3 INAN		<i>si/ti</i>		<i>-(h)e</i>	
3 ANAPH		<i>ni</i>			

Zande marks logophoricity (see ex. 1. and 6.) in a way which in the terms of BOYELDIEU (2004:3) is not 'strict', i.e. having specific forms, but 'mixed'. The logophoric pronouns serve in other contexts as pronouns of ANIMATE gender. Logophoricity in Zande can be expressed in a number of syntactic positions (subject, object, possessive, adjuncts) and it is number sensitive. In order to clearly indicate where in this paper pronouns of ANIMATE gender are used to indicate logophoricity they are glossed LOG.

6. *Dari ki-ya u gu du gizaza yo.*  
 frog SEQ-say LOG.s1 immobile be bottle there  
 'And the frog said that it was quietly in the bottle.'

#### 4. Copular clauses

Zande has three copulas or copula verbs, *nga/ngia*<sup>3</sup>, *du*, and *ni*, which are used for different types of copular clauses<sup>4</sup>. In the following, the most common usages of the three copulas will be presented. Best described is the equative copula *nga* 'be of a certain quality' (GORE 1926:72f; LAGAE 1925:112; TUCKER 1959:147-157; BOYD 1998:40ff). The predicate is always a nominal which may consist of a noun (ex. 7) a nominalized pronoun (8), or the finite form of a verb plus its complement (9).<sup>5</sup> In certain tenses/aspects the copula has the form *ngia*.

7. *mi nga gude.*  
 1s COP boy  
 'I am a man.' (GORE 1926:73)
8. *gu rago-re nga gi-mi.*  
 DEF.D area-DEM COP POSS-1s.1  
 'This area is mine.'
9. *tingida pa-boro nga bi-ni.*  
 remember side-person COP see-ANAPH  
 'Remembering a person is seeing him/her.'

Some of TUCKER's (1959:127) examples, e.g., *mi ngá zàndè* 'I am a Zande' (eastern dialect) vs. *mì ni zande* (western dialects), show some overlap of the functions of the copulas *nga* and *ni*. His references to

<sup>3</sup> According to GORE (1926:73f) *nga* is an unconjugated copula which is used only in the present tense, while *ngia* is a conjugated copula, which is used in non-present tenses. His examples indicate, however, that *nga* is realis, while *ngia* is irrealis, e.g. *si ngia* (INAN.1 COP) 'it is that/if it be that'.

<sup>4</sup> Zande also has copulaless clauses, e.g. *ba-kumba nga maingba te* (father-man NEG beard NEG) 'An old man is not the beard.' But this construction is not of relevance for this paper.

<sup>5</sup> Examples of intransitive verbs in this construction are not known.

the areas where the data were collected indicate, however, that the overlap is an areal feature. This assumption is confirmed by the fact that Bandia and the Nzakara, the westernmost members of the Zande group, also use the copula *ni* in this construction. But since this paper is based on data from the eastern dialects, mostly from Sudan, the western dialects do not play a role.

TUCKER (1959:147) observes that in the so-called "inverted construction" where the predicate noun is in focus, e.g. *kúmbá ngá mì* 'I am a *man* / a man I am' (see also ex. 10) only the copula *nga* is allowed in all dialects.

10. *'e nda wa oni ya boro biriki nga ko, ...*  
 EXCLAM comrade like 2p.1 say person deceit COP 3m  
 'Eh, you there, since you say that he is a *cheat* ...' (EVANS-PRITCHARD 1974:41)

The behaviour of the copula-verb<sup>6</sup> *du* 'be (at some place), exist' depends on whether it is used in simplex clauses or in clauses having a secondary predicate. In simplex clauses it is used to indicate local presence and possession. As a selfstanding predicate it indicates the identity of the subject in situations, where the specific location is irrelevant or understood, e.g. *mi du* (1s.1 be) 'it is I'. The specific location is, however, usually expressed by an adverb (ex. 11) or a locative noun as a complement. When *be* 'hand' constitutes the complement, *du* describes a situation of alienable possession (ex. 12).<sup>7</sup> *Du* is also used for attributive clauses, the attributes consisting of adjectives (ex. 13). This type of attributive clauses is not frequent, which may be partly due to the fact that Zande does not have many adjectives. When followed by the preposition *wa* 'like' *du* describes similitude of the subject with some other nominal item (ex. 14).

11. *Gu kura gume duru ki ya, u du re.*  
 DEF.D relative relative snail SEQ say LOGs.1 be here  
 'Another of his<sub>1</sub> [Snail's] relatives should tell [Elephant] that he<sub>1</sub> was already there.' (GORE 1926:141)

12. *si a-du be-re mbata.*  
 INAN.1 III-be hand-1s.2 formerly  
 'First it was mine.' (lit.: 'formerly it was in my hand') (GORE 1926:74)

13. *be kumba du nyanyaki.*  
 arm man be strong  
 'The arm of a man is strong.' (GORE 1926:25)

14. *Mbata a-zande a-du wa kina a-nya mvuo.*  
 formerly PL-Zande III-be like merely PL-animal bush  
 'In the past Azande were just like wild animals.' (EVANS-PRITCHARD 1956:73)

A predicate consisting of *du* + complement may be followed by a depictive secondary predicate<sup>8</sup>. This latter is introduced by the anaphoric pronoun *ni* the antecedent of which is the subject of the main clause or, as in example (15) the subject, *a-wiri-ko* 'his child' as well as the main predicate, *ue* 'two'. At the same time, the anaphoric pronoun marks the background information on its left. Note that the complement must be a nominal, a bare adjective is not allowed in this position. GORE (1926: 23) erroneously analyses the subsequent *ni* as a preposition, "untranslatable into English and [ ... ] best expressed by a dash".

15. *a-wiri-ko du ue ni a-kumba.*  
 PL-child-3s be two ANAPH PL-man  
 'His children are two – boys (lit.: men).' (GORE 1926:23)

<sup>6</sup> According to GORE (1926:73f) *du* is a conjugated non-copula.

<sup>7</sup> Alienable possession within the non-phrase is marked by the preposition *ga* (GORE 1926:26).

<sup>8</sup> For the discussion of depictive secondary predicates see HIMMELMANN and SCHULTZE-BERND (2005) and GÜLDEMANN (1996, 2005).

This same function of *ni* introducing a secondary predicate is also found when *du* has no complement (ex. 16, 17). *Du* is a fairly empty source of background information, and it is the secondary predicate that gives the first substantial information on the subject. There is also more emphasis on the information in this construction than in constructions as in example (13) (GORE 1926:36).

It must be noted that adjectives in this construction must be nominalized by suffixing a pronoun of the second series, which is co-referential with the main subject (ex. 17).

16. *ko du ni kumba.*  
 3sm be ANAPH man  
 'He is a man.'<sup>9</sup> (GORE 1926:74)
17. *Gude du ni gbegberē-ko.*  
 boy be ANAPH bad-3m.2  
 'The boy is bad.' (GORE 1926:39)

Copular clauses having the copula *ní* are exclusively of the attributive type. They are regularly used for the expression of local position (ex. 18), but also for situations which have undergone change (ex. 19). The predicates of *ni* consist of adjectives or gerunds to which is suffixed the pronoun of the second series co-referential with the subject.

18. *nzunzu-ngua ni rugurugu-he rogo siani.*  
 fruit-tree COP straighten.up.RED-INAN.2 inside plate  
 'The fruit (of a tree) is in an upright position on the plate.'
19. *gi kubaya re ni ba-wene hihi-he.*  
 DEF.P cup DEM COP MAX-nice fill-INAN.2  
 'This cup is nicely full'.

The attributive predicates may also consist of nominalised adjectives (ex. 20). The nominalisation is marked again by a pronoun of the second series suffixed to the adjective.

20. *mo ni toni-ro.*  
 2s.1 COP small-2s.2  
 'You are small.' (TUCKER 1959:132)

## 5. The anaphoric pronoun *ni*

In Zande there is frequent reference to participants by means of the anaphoric pronoun *ni*.

21. *boro na-yamba nga wiri-ni*  
 person II-call NEG child-ANAPH
- ku ti ga kura-ni nduka te.*  
 DIR at POSS other-ANAPH garden NEG  
 'A person does not call his child to his neighbour's garden.' (GORE 1926:139)

In this function *ni* is usually defined as a NEUTRAL or INDEFINITE personal pronoun and listed in the tables of personal pronouns (GORE 1926:28; TUCKER 1959:126; CLAUDI 1985:95). Its analysis is, however, problematic and it has been ascribed a number of different functions, not all of which are confirmed by my investigations. Therefore, in this paper, *ni* is not listed in the table of pronouns (cf. Table 1).

<sup>9</sup> Gore gives "It is he, a man" as the literal translation without, however, claiming that it reflects the exact meaning better.

There are three main reasons for the confusion about *ni*. First, it is not always clearly distinguished from the homophonous preposition *ni* 'with, by means of' (cf. GORE 1962:74). Secondly, it is described as an "occasional" INANIMATE object pronoun (GORE 1926:31), but without indication under which conditions it is used and why it occurs only occasionally. Thirdly, *ni* is called an 'indefinite pronoun'. Under this latter denomination LAGAE & VANDEN PLAS (1925:125) describe it as a sex-neutral pronoun referring exclusively to +HUMAN antecedents. GORE (1926) and TUCKER (1959), however, claim that *ni* is used only in case the sex of the referent is known. This assumption would mean that one function of *ni* is to reduce redundancy. It is noteworthy that speakers of Zande quite readily give the same explanation when asked why in a given context *ni* is used and not *ko* 'he' or *ri* 'she', e.g. *kpu-ni* instead of *kpu-ko* 'his house' in example 1. The explanation does not hold, since there are many contexts where the gender sensitive pronouns *ko* 'he' and *ri* 'she' are found although the sex of the reference noun is clear, as in example (22). Here the sex of the pronoun *ko* is clear from its antecedent *gude* 'boy' and also from the picture of the "Frogstory" (Mayer 1969) described in this sentence.

22. *Gude a-du yo ... ko a-du na zogozogo dari na ango wa-sá.*  
 boy III-be there he III-be with domestic.RED frog and dog like-one  
 'There was a boy ..., he was together with a domestic frog and a dog.'

GORE (1926:28) and BOYD (1995:167) claim that *ni* is used only in the singular. An example from Gore's texts shows its use with the antecedent in the plural (ex. 23). But there are apparently not many examples of pluralic antecedents of *ni*.

23. *i ki ndu na ni ki moi-e ku mvua yo.*  
 3p SEQ go with ANAPH SEQ put-INAN.2 DIR grass there  
 'And they went with them (rats) and put them into the grass.' (GORE 1926:121)

In its alleged function of a personal pronoun *ni* is insofar defective as it cannot constitute the subject or the object of a main predicate. It occurs only the function of adjuncts as shown in examples (22-24). In all of these examples, which consist of simple clauses, *ni* refers to inanimate items, including the dead rats in example (26).

24. *Mo ndu sa-ni.*  
 2s.1 go towards-ANAPH  
 'Go for it.' (GORE 1926:31)

25. *Mi na-ke pai ti-ni.*  
 1s.1 II-write matter on-ANAPH  
 'I am writing on it.' (GORE 1926:31)

26. *I ki ndu na-ni ki moi-e ku mvua yo.*  
 3p SEQ go with-ANAPH SEQ put-INAN.2 DIR grass there  
 'And they went with them (rats) and put them into the grass.' (Gore 1926:121)

GORE (1926:105) assumes that one of the functions of the anaphoric pronoun *ni* is to serve as a local pronoun with the meaning 'at' (see ex. 27). With regard to this function Boyd (p.c.) calls *ni* a 'relative locative'. Its use is, however, not restricted to expressions of location, but occurs as well with temporal adjuncts (ex. 27, 28). It must, however, be taken into consideration that *ni* is only used, when the adverb or interrogative of time or place is focalized and moved to clause initial position. The syntactic function of *ni* is to fill the slot left open by the moved item in focus.

27. *Wari du ba-mo ni?* cf. *Dari mo wari?*  
 where be father-2s.1 ANAPH frog 2s.1 where  
 ‘Where (at which place) is your father?’ ‘Frog where are you?’ [information about  
 [Information about the location is asked for] the frog is asked for]
28. *Uru ko a-mangi-e ni.* cf. *Mo mangi-e yuru.*  
 sun/day he III-do-INAN.2 ANAPH 2s.1 do.PF-INAN.2 night  
 It was at daytime that he did it. Do it at night.  
 (GORE 1926:95) (GORE 1926:94)
29. *ho ko / ri a-yamba dia-ko / kumba-ri ni*  
 whe 3m / 3f III-call woman-3m / man-3f ANAPH  
 ‘[...] when he / she called his wife / her husband’

A closer look at the examples (27 – 29) shows that the anaphoric pronoun *ni* marks background information with regard to the focused adverbials and interrogatives which constitute its antecedents, i.e. information that is necessary to comprehend the given utterance.

The usages in examples (27 – 29) appear to indicate that *ni* is a number-neutral anaphoric pronoun with only inanimate antecedents. In its usage as a marker of background information *ni* can, however, also have +HUMAN antecedents (ex. 30). As a consequence it must be qualified as neutral with regard to gender and to number.

The exact conditions for the occurrences of *ni* are not quite clear. It does not fulfil the criteria observed by BHAT (2004:75) in 37 languages reported to have anaphoric pronouns. First, in all of them the pronoun is part of the system of demonstratives<sup>10</sup> which are bimorphemic, while *ni* is monomorphemic. Second they are mainly used for removing the ambiguity resulting from the exophoric and endophoric uses of demonstrative pronouns which not a function of *ni*.

## 6. Secondary predicates

As shown in example (15) *ni*'s function of marking background information is also given in clauses containing secondary predicates. These secondary predicates are always nominal and ascribe qualities to a core participant of the main predicate. With regard to depictive secondary predicates proper HIMMELMANN and SCHULZE-BERND (2005:56) state that they are restricted to focus position, and this apparently also holds true for the resultative secondary predicate in example (32).

30. *a-wiri-ko du ue ni a-kumba.*  
 PL-child-3m be two ANAPH PL-man  
 ‘His children are two – boys.’ (GORE 1926:23)
31. *mo ye na nyanyaki ngua ni ue-e.*  
 2s.1 come with strong tree ANAPH two-INAN.2  
 ‘Bring strong timbers – two of them.’ (GORE 1926:45)
32. *Mo dua bambu ni bakere-e.* cf. *Mo dua bakere bamboo.*  
 2s.1 build house ANAPH big-INAN.2 2s.1 build big house  
 ‘Build a house, a big one.’ (GORE 1926:36) ‘Build a big house.’ (ibid.)

In examples (30 – 32) *ni* the antecedents of the anaphoric pronoun *ni* are not focalized adverbials, but non-focalized participants. In the first two examples the subject of the main clause is also the subject of the secondary predicate, while in the third example the object of the main clause constitutes the subject of the secondary predicate. As a consequence *ni* does not occupy the syntactic position of its

<sup>10</sup> Demonstratives are bimorphemic. An anaphoric pronoun "may be either a distinct pronominal element that contrasts with other demonstrative elements on this point, or alternatively, it may be an affix that is attached.



antecedent as in examples (27 – 29), but besides marking co-reference it constitutes the syntactic link between the antecedent and the secondary predicate which is in focus. On its left side there is background information and on its right side the focalized information. The pronoun suffixes *e-* of the secondary predicates in examples (31) and (32) and the preceding anaphoric pronoun *ni*<sup>11</sup> share co-reference with the same antecedent. All this makes an interpretation of *ni* as a copula introducing attributes possible if not likely.

While in examples (30 – 32) the main verbs have complements, including the copula-verb *du* in example (30), *du* has no complement in example (33). Here, the subject of the main clause, the only noun phrase of the main clause, is the only possible antecedent of *ni*. Since *du* is semantically fairly empty, the formal secondary predicate constitutes – from the point of information structure – the first predicate. Nevertheless, *ni* functions here as a syntactic link between the two predicates. Although Gore does not make out a difference in the meaning of the two examples (33) and (33a), we may assume on the basis of what he says concerning constructions similar to the one in example (33) (GORE 1926:36) that there is more emphasis on the secondary predicate in this example<sup>12</sup> than on the simple predicate in example (33a).

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>33. <i>Gude du ni</i>                      <i>gbegberē-ko.</i><br/>         boy be ANAPH /COP bad-3m<br/>         ‘The boy is bad.’ (lit.: the boy is badness of him)<br/>         (Gore 1926:39)</p> | <p>cf. 33a. <i>Gude du gbegberē.</i><br/>         boy be bad<br/>         ‘The boy is bad.’ (ibid.)</p> |
|--|---|

The construction as in example (33) with the semantically empty copula-verb *du* as the main predicate in direct neighbourhood of the anaphoric pronoun *ni*, which may be interpreted as a copula, apparently constitutes the bridging context construction in which *ni* has developed as a new copula the functions of which are complementary to those of *du* and of *du + ni*.

Whereas *du* introduces normal, non-emphasized adjective attributes (33a), *du + ni* introduces nominalised attributes which constitute new or emphasized information (33), but describing a situation which may be old or new. *Ni*, finally, as a copula of its own, is restricted to predicates consisting of nominalised verbs, which describe situations resulting from change (ex. 2, 3, 34).

34. *gu roko re na bakere arō ti-ni ni äsiäsi-hē ti girimara.*  
 DE cloth DE wit big hole at-AN CC hang.RED-IN at wire  
 ‘There is a hole in the towel on the wire.’

## 7. Conclusions

The development of the copula *ni* from the homophonous anaphoric pronoun differs considerably from the development of the copula in the Semitic languages as described by Katz in various aspects. Most important appears to be that with regard to the Semitic languages the development of the one single copula in a situation of absence of a copula is described, whereas in Zande *ni* has developed when one other copula, *nga*, and the copula-verb *du* ‘be (present)’ were already given.

Katz states that copulas and pronouns code the same basic concept of “existence in time and space”, and that therefore third person anaphora can be seen as related to the predication of existence. The copula *nga* and the copula-verb *du* express already the concept of “existence in time and space” and there should not have been the need for a further copula. The function of the third copula *ni* is, however, not so much to indicate the existence of the subject in time and space, but rather as an item that has undergone change. The very morphological construction of the predicate, the reduplicated verb to which a possessive pronoun (i.e. a pronoun of the second series) is suffixed, describes it quite clearly as an item resulting from change.

<sup>11</sup> Note that GORE (1926:45) interprets *ni* in example 30 as making part of a numeral phrase. But in most of his examples containing numerals introduced by *ni* these may be considered secondary predicates. Only few, where *ni* has no clear antecedent, may be interpreted as adverbials.

<sup>12</sup> GORE (1926:36) speaks of an adjective (ex. 33a) replaced by an adjectival phrase (ex. 33).



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