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# Bemba benefactive constructions in the typology of applicatives[1]

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Applicative verbs typically introduce an additional nominal argument into the subcategorization frame of their corresponding base verb, so that, for example in Bemba, the transitive verb *-lemba* 'write' becomes ditransitive when the applicative suffix *-el-* is added:[2]

(1)   (a)   *n-ka-lemb-a*       *kalata*                   [Bemba]
            SM1SG-FUT-write-FV   9.letter
            'I will write a letter.'

       (b)   *n-ka-lemb-el-a*        *bá-mayó*   *kalata*
            SM1SG-FUT-write-APPL-FV   2-mother   9.letter
            'I will write my mother a letter.'

In (1b), the applied object *bámayó* 'mother' is licensed by the applicative marker *-el-*. In this example, the applied object is thematically a beneficiary, but other thematic roles, such as location, instrument or reason, can typically be expressed by applicatives. Furthermore, different readings of benefactive applicatives can be distinguished, including plain benefactives, recipient benefactives and substitutive benefactives (Kittilä 2005, Van Valin & LaPolla 1997, Zúñiga & Kittilä 2010). However, languages differ as to how different interpretations of applicatives are

[2] Bemba examples without reference are from the author's fieldwork in Zambia from 1998 to 2011. I am grateful to Fenson Mwape, Rhoda Sambwa, Honoria Kula and Nancy Kula for discussion of the Bemba data reported here. The following abbreviations are used: 1, 2, 3, … = noun class number; 1/2/3 SG/PL = 1st, 2nd , 3rd person singular/plural; ACC = accusative; APPL = applicative; ART = article; BEN = benefactive; CLR = clarification; COM = comitative; COMP = complementizer; DAT = dative; DEIC = deictic; DEM = demonstrative; EMP = emphasis; F = feminine; FUT = future; FV = final vowel; INST = instrument; LC = locative clitic; M = masculine; MAL = malefactive; NOM = nominative; OM = object marker; PE = perceived evidence; PI = past imperfective; POSS = possessive; PROG = progressive; PRT = preterite; REU = reported evidence unknown; SBV = subjunctive; SM = subject marker; SUB = subordinator; TWD = toward.

formally distinguished: While some languages, for example Hakha Lai, distinguish morphologically between different applicative constructions, many Bantu languages have only one applicative marker which can be used for a range of thematically distinct constructions (Peterson 2007). With respect to different senses of benefactive constructions, many languages distinguish formally between recipient benefactives and substitutive benefactives, with plain benefactives often marked identically to one of the two groups (Kittilä 2005). The present paper presents a discussion of Bemba benefactive constructions, and locates them in this wider typological field of applicative constructions. In particular, the paper shows that Bemba belongs to a group of languages in which substitutive benefactives are marked both by applicative and substitutive benefactive morphology, and develops a small typology of the interaction of applicative and benefactive markers.


## 2. FORMAL MARKING OF APPLICATIVES

Applicative constructions are typically marked by verbal morphology, as in (1), above, and for some authors, this is a defining quality of the construction (e.g. Peterson 2007: 1). On the other hand, some authors include applicatives expressed periphrastically (e.g. Creissels 2006), and comparative analyses of benefactive constructions, which are in some sense a sub-type of applicatives, often include both verbally and nominally marked constructions (e.g. Zúñiga & Kittilä 2010 2010). However, irrespective of formal marking, applicatives can express a range of thematically different relations, the most common of which include benefactive, malefactive, recipient, goal, instrument, location, and circumstantial (e.g. Mchombo 2004, Peterson 2007). In some languages, different thematic relations are expressed by different applicative markers. Hakha Lai (Tibeto-Burman), for example, has seven different applicative suffixes, distinguishing benefactive/malefactive, malefactive/allative, comitative, instrument, additional benefactive, prioritive, and relinquitive applicatives. The first four of these are illustrated below (Peterson 2007: 18-23):

(2)     *ʔa-ka-thiʔ-piak*                                                    [Hakha Lai]
        SM3SG-OM1SG-die-BEN
        'He died for me.'


(3)     *kheeŋ    ʔa-ka-hloʔn-hnoʔ*
        dish      SM3SG-OM1SG-throw-MAL
        'She threw the dish at me.'


(4)     *ka-law          ʔan-ka-thloʔ-pii*
        POSS1SG-field    SM3PL-OM1SG-weed-COM
        'They weeded my field (together) with me.'

(5)  *tiilooŋ   khaa   tiiva   kan-Ø-tan-naak*
     boat   DEIC   river   SM1PL-OM3SG-cross-INST
     'We used the boat to cross the river.'

In contrast to languages like Hakha Lai, most Bantu languages only have one applicative marker, which is typically a reflex of the Proto-Bantu applicative marker *-ɪl-* (Meeussen 1967), and which can be used in thematically different constructions, as illustrated from Bemba in the examples below.

(6)  *bá-á-ípík-ìl-a*       *Chìsángá*   *ífy-ùmbù*            [Bemba]
     SM2-PAST-cook-APPL-FV   1.Chisanga   8-potatoes
     'They have cooked potatoes for Chisanga.'

(7)  *baRhoda   bá-léé-ciish-il-a*          *ífy-akufwala   mu-ngánda*
     2.Rhoda   SM2-PROG-iron-APPL-FV   8-clothes       18-house
     'Rhoda is ironing clothes in the house.'

(8)  *bá-á-ˈbwél-él-a*          *ku-mu-shi*
     SM2-PAST-return-APPL-FV   17-3-village
     'They returned to the village' (Sims 1959: 129)

(9)  *Mutálé   a-léé-ˈípík-íl-a*          *na   supuni*
     Mutale   SM1-PROG-cook-APPL-FV   with   9.spoon
     'Mutale is cooking with a spoon.'

(10) *tu-léé-ˈbómb-él-a*          *indálama*
     SM1PL-PROG-work-APPL-FV   9.money
     'We are working for money.' (Sadler 1964: 270)

The examples show that the Bemba applicative marker *-il-/-el-/-in-/-en-* (the differences are due to vowel and nasal harmony) is found in applicative constructions with different thematic meanings: benefactive (6), locative (7), direction (8), instrument (9), and motive (10). However, Bemba is unusual for a Bantu language in that there is a formal distinction between different readings of benefactive applicatives, as will be seen in section 4.


3. DIFFERENT TYPES OF BENEFACTIVE APPLICATIVES

Benefactive applicatives can express events with slightly different meanings. Often three different senses are distinguished, depending on whether the event involves the passing of an entity from the agent to a recipient (recipient benefactives), whether there is a beneficiary who simply benefits from the event without necessarily receiving anything (plain benefactives), or whether the agent performs an action during the event instead of, or in place of a substituee

(substitutive benefactives). According to Kittilä (2005), languages vary with respect to how these different senses are formally distinguished, and four different broad types can be distinguished: tripartite languages, recipient-prominent languages, benefactive-prominent languages, and neutral languages, illustrated in more detail below.

Tripartite languages are rare, and are only exemplified by English and Icelandic in Kittilä's (2005) study. In these languages, all three benefactive senses are marked differently, as shown from Icelandic (Germanic, Indo-European) (Kittilä 2005: 278):

(11) *maðurinn*   *gaf*      *konu/konunni*           *bók*              [Icelandic]
    man.NOM   gave      woman/woman.DAT    book
    'The man gave the woman a book.'

(12) *hann*       *bakaði*   *köku*       *handa*   *mér*
    he.NOM     bake.PAST cake.ACC   for      me
    'He baked me a cake.'

(13) *hann*       *bakaði*   *köku*       *fyrir*  *mig*
    he.NOM     bake.PAST cake.ACC   for      me
    'He baked me a cake/he baked a cake for me (instead of me).'

Recall that studies of benefactives, including Kittilä's, tend not to restrict benefactives to constructions marked by verbal morphology and so the difference between the Icelandic examples above results from different nominal marking. Recipient benefactives are expressed by a bare dative NP (11), while in plain benefactives (12), the beneficiary argument is introduced by the preposition *handa*, and in substitutive benefactives (13), the substitutive argument is marked by the preposition *fyrir*.

In recipient-prominent languages, such as Finish, Yorùbá, and Southeastern Tepehuan, recipient benefactives and plain benefactives are marked identically, but substitutive benefactives are marked differently, as seen in Yorùbá (Niger-Congo) (Rowlands 1969: 83-84, quoted in Kittilä 2005: 280):

(14) *ó*    *fi*   *owó*    *náà* *fún*  *mi*                         [Yorùbá]
    he    put    money    the   give  me
    'He gave me the money.'

(15) *rà*    *á*  *fún*  *mi*
    buy   it   give  me
    'Buy it for me.'

(16) *bá         mi    lọ s' ọ́jà*
    COM/BEN    me    go to market
    'Go with/for me to the market.'

In Yorùbá, both recipient and plain benefactives are marked by *fún* 'give' in a serial verb construction (see e.g. Shibatani 1996 for the relation between 'give' and benefactive constructions), in contrast to substitutive benefactives, which are marked by the preposition *bá* 'with, on behalf of' which can introduce comitative and substitutive arguments and which may be related to the verb *bá* 'meet, catch up with'.[3] Similarly, in Southeastern Tepehuan (Uto-Aztecan) (Willett 1991: 76-77, 182-183; quoted from Kittilä 2005: 280), recipient (17) and plain (18) benefactives pattern together, as opposed to substitutive benefactives (19):

(17) *jaró ba-m-bɨɨ-dya-c        gu-m       sa' ua?*          [Tepehuan]
    who  TWD-2SG-pass-APPL-PI    ART-2SG    blanket
    'Who brought you your blanket?'

(18) *ma'n-ap    jiñ-som-dya-'      gu    cutun*
    one-2SG    1SG-sew-APPL-FUT   ART   shirt
    'Please sew a shirt for me.'

(19) *chiñi-a'-ap   gu-m       xix       cu-m    tɨmiñ-xi-dya-'*
    ask-FUT-2SG   ART-2SG    sibling   so-2SG   lower-BEN-APPL-FUT

    *gu-m       sa'ua    na   gu'   të'cov   dá*
    ART-2SG    blanket  SUB  but   high     sit
    'Ask your (older) sibling to get your blanket down for you because it's up high.'

The Tepehuan facts are particularly interesting because benefactive constructions are marked by verbal morphology, and thus comparable to Bemba applicatives, and, furthermore, because substitutive benefactives are in fact marked doubly: As (19) shows, the verb form includes both the applicative marker *-dya* and the substitutive benefactive marker *-xi*. A similar distribution of morphemes is found in Dakota (Siouan), where recipient and plain benefactives are marked by a prefix *ki-*, but substitutives by *kici-* which might reflect a historical reduplication of *ki-* (Boas and Deloria 1941: 86). In both languages substitutives are marked by a general applicative marker in addition to a specific substitutive benefactive marker. We will see below that the same is true in Bemba.

Beneficiary-prominent languages are the opposite of recipient-prominent languages in that plain and substitutive benefactives pattern together, while recipient benefactives are marked differently, as in Tamil (Dravidian) (Lehmann et al. 2000: 70, 76, 93, quoted from Kittilä 2005: 281-2):

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[3] I am grateful to Akin Oyètádé for discussion of the Yorùbá examples.

(20)  *raman  biravy-ukku  pant-ai  kuṭu-tt-aan*          [Tamil]
      Raman  Biravy-DAT   ball-ACC   give-PRT-3SG.M
      'Raman has given Biravy a ball.'

(21)  *avan   en-ukk-aaka    oru   ttopi-yai   vangi-n-aan*
      3SG.M  1SG-DAT-BEN    a     hat-ACC     buy-PRT-3SG.M
      'He has bought a hat for me.'

(22)  *rani   piḷḷai-akk-aaka    muṭi-yai   vari-viṭṭaaḷ*
      Rani   child-DAT-BEN     hair-ACC   comb-COMP-3SG.F
      'Rani has combed the child's hair (for him/her).'

In Tamil, benefactives are marked by nominal suffixes of the benefactive object. Similar to the Tepehuan data, Tamil benefactives involve double marking: Recipient benefactive objects are marked by a dative suffix, and plain and substitutives are marked in addition by the benefactive suffix *-aaka*. Like in Tepehuan, substitutives are double marked, and recipients are single marked. However, in contrast to Tepehuan, plain benefactives are double marked in Tamil as well.

Finally, neutral languages do not formally distinguish between the three different readings of benefactives. In Thai (Daic) (Bisang 1992: 366, quoted from Kittilä 2005: 285), like in Yorùbá, benefactives are based on a serial verb construction involving a 'give'-type verb, but unlike in Yorùbá, the verb involved in Thai is the same, *hâj*, in all three constructions:

(23)  *kháw sòŋ còdmǎaj  hâj  phŷan*                    [Thai]
      he    send  letter    give  friend
      'He sends his friend a letter.'

(24)  *dɛɛŋ   jiŋ   nóg  hâj  sùdaa*
      Deng   shoot  bird  give  Sudaa
      'Deng shoots a bird for Sudaa.'

(25)  *dɛɛŋ   paj  talàad  hâj  sùdaa*
      Deng   go    market   give  Sudaa
      'Deng is going to the market for Sudaa.'

The same is of course also true of most Bantu languages, where different thematic readings as well as different benefactive readings are typically expressed by the same applicative marker, as is shown by the Swahili examples below:[4]

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(26) *Juma*    *a-li-m-let-e-a*              *m-vulana*    *samaki*    [Swahili]
Juma    SM1-PAST-OM1-bring-APPL-FV    1-boy        9.fish
'Juma brought the boy a fish.'

(27) *Bi Subira*    *a-li-jeng-e-a*              *familia*    *y-ake*        *nyumba*
Ms Subira    SM1-PAST-build-APPL-FV    9.family    9-POSS3SG    9.house
'Ms Subira built a house for her family.'

(28) *mw-aname*    *a-li-m-fung-i-a*              *m-vulana*    *m-lango*
1-man        SM1-PAST-OM1-close-APPL-FV    1-boy        3-door
'The man closed the door for the boy.'

While it is often difficult to distinguish between different readings out of context,[5] the examples above show that in Swahili recipient, plain and substitutive benefactive readings are all marked by the applicative marker *-i-/-e-*, and so that Swahili is a neutral language with respect to benefactive marking.


## 4. BEMBA SUBSTITUTIVES AND THE DOUBLE MARKING OF BENEFACTIVE APPLICATIVES

As illustrated in section 2, Bemba applicatives are marked by the applicative suffix *-il-/-el-/-in-/-en-* and can express a range of thematic relations, as is typical for Bantu languages. When it comes to benefactives, however, Bemba is different from most Bantu languages, in that substitutives can be formally distinguished from plain and recipient benefactives. While the latter two are marked by the applicative marker (29, 30), substitutives are in addition marked by the (noun class 17) locative clitic *-ko* (31):

(29) (a)    *u-n-túm-ín-e*              *mw-an-ó*            [Bemba]
        SM2SG-OM1SG-send-APPL-SBV    1-child-POSS2SG
        'Send me your son.' (Sambeek 1955: 86)

    (b)    *tu-a-ku-lét-él-a*              *í-búúku*    *íli*
        SM1PL-PAST-OM2SG-bring-APPL-FV    5-book        5DEM
        'We brought this book for you.' (Sadler 1964: 270)

(30) (a)    *lek-a*        *n-kw-íkát-íl-e*                *ncinga*
        Leave-FV    SM1SG-OM2SG-hold-APPL-SBV    bike
        'Let me hold your bicycle for you.' (Sambeek 1955: 85)

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[5] Marten & Kula (fcmg.) discuss contextualized Swahili examples which support the same conclusion.

(b) *bá-mayó*    *bá-á-ˈípík-il-a*    *ábá-ana*    *ífy-umbu*
2-mother    SM2-PAST-cook-APPL-FV    2-children    8-potatoes
'The mother has just cooked potatoes for the children.'

(c) *á-ká-ˈbá-téyánish-ish-a*    *í-tébulo*
SM1-FUT-OM2-prepare-APPL-FV    5-table
'He will set/prepare the table for them.' (Sadler 1964: 270)

(31) (a) *ábá-icé*    *bá-ká-send-el-a-kó*    *im-fúmu*    *ubu-ta*
2-children    SM2-FUT-carry-APPL-FV-LC17    9-chief    14-bow
'The children will carry the bow on behalf of (instead of) the chief.'

(b) *a-alí-n-sós-éel-e-kó*
SM1-REM.PAST-OM1SG-speak-APPL-PFV-LC17
'He spoke in my favour/defence.' (cf. Sambeek 1955: 85)

(c) *á-ká-ˈbá-téyánish-ish-a-kó*    *í-tébulo*
SM1-FUT-OM2-prepare-APPL-FV-LC17    5-table
'He will set/prepare the table instead of them.' (Sadler 1964: 271)

The examples show that only substitutive benefactives are marked by the locative clitic *-ko*. The difference in interpretation is particularly clear from the 'minimal pair' (30c) and (31c), distinguishing between plain benefactive 'for them' and substitutive 'instead of them'. Bemba substitutives are built on benefactive applicatives, and are incompatible with malefactive, directional or instrumental applicatives. Like Bemba applicatives in general, they are syntactically asymmetric while semantically, substitutives express that the agent performs the action in place of, instead of, or on behalf of a substituee, usually encoded by the applied object (see Marten & Kula fcmg. for a more detailed discussion of Bemba benefactive constructions).

In terms of formal marking, Bemba patterns with Tepehuan and Dakota. In all three languages, benefactives are marked verbally by two different markers. There is a general applicative marker, found in all three benefactive constructions, and in addition there is a specific substitutive benefactive marker found in addition to the general applicative marker only with substitutives,: *-ko* in Bemba, *-xi* in Tepehuan and *ci-* in Dakota. As noted above, this contrasts with languages like Tamil and Swahili, where all three benefactives are marked by the same applicative marker, and also with Tamil, where plain and substitutives are marked by two markers. The situation is summarized in the mini-typology in Table 1, where A stands for applicative marker, and B for benefactive marker:

**Table 1**
Applicative and benefactive marking

| | Swahili, Thai | Bemba, Dakota, Tepehuan | Tamil | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Recipient | A | A | A | AB | AB | AB |
| Plain | A | A | AB | AB | AB | A |
| Substitutive | A | AB | AB | AB | A | A |

The summary shows how applicative and benefactive markers combine in different languages. As noted above, a further difference exists between the Bemba group and Tamil, namely that marking in the former involves verbal morphology, while in Tamil, marking involves nominal morphology. Further research will show to what extent this difference is significant for the pattern noted in Table 1. An interesting feature in Table 1 is that the right half of the table is empty. It would be populated by languages in which all three readings of benefactives are marked by two morphemes, where recipient and plain benefactives are marked by two markers, or where only recipients are doubly marked. However, in the small convenience sample of this paper – based on the work of Kittilä (2005) and a few Bantu languages – no languages with these patterns were found. Whether this is accidental or systematic has to be addressed by a larger study.


5. CONCLUSION

The paper has shown that Bemba, like many Bantu languages, has one applicative marker which is used in a range of thematically different constructions. However, unusually for a Bantu language, Bemba formally distinguishes substitutive benefactives from recipient and plain benefactives, by marking the former by a locative clitic -*ko*, in addition to the applicative marker. Cross-linguistically, Bemba is similar to Southeastern Tepehuan and Dakota, since all three languages mark substitutives by a specific marker in addition to the applicative marker. A related pattern is found in Tamil, where not only substitutives, but both plain and substitutive benefactives are doubly marked, albeit by nominal morphology. The small typology in section 4 shows the relation between the four languages, and languages like Swahili and Thai, where all three readings are marked simply by an applicative marker. However, more comparative research with a larger sample of languages is needed to show the typological spread of double applicative-benefactive marking.

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