

Chapter 4

Multiple argument marking in Bantoid: From syntheticity to analyticity

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All evidence points to the... hypothesis that such [analytic] languages are the logically extreme analytic developments of more synthetic languages which because of processes of phonetic disintegration have had to reexpress by analytical means combinations of ideas originally expressed within the framework of the single word. (Sapir 1933[1949]: 18–19)

This paper addresses the mechanisms of change that lead from syntheticity to analyticity in the Bantoid languages of the Nigeria-Cameroon borderland area. I address the different strategies that are adopted as these languages lose applicative “verb extensions” found elsewhere in Bantu and Niger-Congo. I show that although historical recipient, benefactive, and instrumental applicative marking on verbs allowed multiple object noun phrases (send-APPL chief letter, cook-APPL child rice, cut-APPL knife meat), they have been replaced by adpositional phrases and/or serial verb constructions in all branches of Bantoid. I map out the different analytic strategies that have been adopted and reconstruct the original verbal, nominal and pronominal sources of the different grammaticalization processes. Of particular interest is the development of a recipient/benefactive preposition ‘to, for’ from the word for ‘hand’ and a comitative/instrumental preposition ‘with’ from a third person plural pronoun.



1 Establishing a Proto-Bantoid synthetic system

The general issue I address in this paper is how to account for the alternative grammaticalization strategies adopted as a highly synthetic (agglutinative) language develops towards analyticity. My focus will be on the multiple pathways that can be observed between the inherited head-marking verb structures of Proto-Bantoid and the more analytical structures found in most of the daughter languages spoken today.¹ As noted by Dimmendaal (2000: 187–188), among others, extensive head-marking occurs in at least some languages in all four of Greenberg’s (1963) macro-stocks: Nilo-Saharan, Afro-Asiatic, “Khoisan”, and, as exemplified in (1), multiple branches of Niger-Congo.

- (1) a. Seereer [“Atlantic” branch; Senegal]
a up-t-ik-t-ir-oox-k-a apeel
 3PL.SM bury-REV-GOAL-INST.APPL-REC-REFL-FUT-INFL shovels
 ‘they’ll go unbury each other with shovels’ (John Merrill, pers.comm.)
- b. Cicipu [Plateau/Central Nigerian branch; Nigeria]
zzá nnà ù-tób-il-is-is-u-wò-wò-nò=mu
 person REL 3SG-cool-PL-CAUS-CAUS-V-ANTICAUS-APPL-PERF=1SG
sháyì
 tea
 ‘the person who has caused tea to become cooled down in a forceful and iterative fashion for me’ (McGill 2009: 209)
- c. Moro [Kordofanian; Sudan]
ow:a g-ubəð-i-tf-ən-ə-ηó
 woman SM.CL-run-CAUS-APPL-PASS-PERF-3SG.OM
 ‘the woman was made to run away from him’ (Rose 2013: 49)
- d. Kinande (Bantu) [Bantoid subbranch; Democratic Republic of Congo]
tu-né-mu-ndi-syá-tá-sya-ya-ba-king-ul-ir-an-is-i-á=ky-ô
 we-TNS/ASP COMPLEX-them-close-REV-APPL-REC-CAUS-CAUS-INFL=it
 ‘we will make it possible one more time for them to open it for each other’
 (Philip Mutaka, pers.comm to Nurse & Philippson 2003: 9)

¹The term “Bantoid” is used in two senses in the literature. First, it refers to a node in the Niger-Congo family tree that includes both Bantu and non-Bantu languages; second, it refers to these latter non-Bantu languages themselves. In most of my discussion I will be citing such Bantoid languages which have evolved significantly further than their agglutinative Bantu cousins.

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The example in (1d) is of most relevance to the present study, as it illustrates several of the most common Bantu derivational suffixes known as verb extensions: causative, applicative etc. As I noted in Hyman (2003), the following valence-marking verb extensions tend to occur in the order Causative-Applicative-Reciprocal-Passive (C-A-R-P) in what I shall refer to as Canonical Bantu (CB):

Table 1: Verb Extensions in Bantu

	<i>Causative</i>	<i>Applicative</i>	<i>Reciprocal</i>	<i>Passive</i>	<i>(C-A-R-P)</i>
Proto-Bantu	-ic-	-il-	-an-	-ʊ-	
Shona	-is-	-il-	-an-	-w-	
Makua	-ih-	-il-	-an-	-iw-	
Chichewa	-its-	-il-	-an-	-idw-	

Of the above extensions, the causative and applicative add valence, while the reciprocal and passive decrease valence. In considering what has occurred within the related Bantoid languages, I will be most concerned with how these languages compensate for the loss of valence-adding extensions, e.g. the applicative, which has multiple functions in CB, illustrated from Chichewa in (2).

- (2) *tum-ir-* (send+applicative)
 ‘send for (s.o.), send to (s.o.), send with (sth.), send to (some place),
 BENEFACTIVE RECIPIENT INSTRUMENT LOCATIVE
 send for (some reason)’
 CIRCUMSTANCE

While CB languages are highly agglutinative, Northwest (NW) Bantu languages often have simpler structures, even extreme analyticity, as in Nzadi, a “Narrow Bantu” language spoken in the Democratic Republic of Congo which has lost valence-related suffixes, replacing them with the following analytic structures (Crane et al. 2011):

- (3) a. causative:
yà ó líŋ mwàán kè líi
 2SG PST want child SBJV cry
 ‘you made the child cry’ (lit. you wanted that the child cry)

- b. benefactive:
bì ó súm mwàán òḡkàán
1PL PST buy child book
'we bought the child a book' (double object)
- c. recipient:
bì ó pé mwàán fùfú
1PL PST give child fufu
'we gave the child fufu'
- d. *bì ó pé fùfú kó mwàán*
1PL PST give fufu to/for child
'we gave fufu to the child'
- e. instrument:
ndé ó píḡ ntsúr tí mbyě
3SG PST cut meat with knife
'he cut meat with a knife'
- f. circumstance:
ndé á sâl sám †é ndzî
3SG PRES work reason of money
'he is working for money'

As can be seen, the above structures represent four different strategies for dealing with the loss of verb extensions: periphrasis (3a), unmarked double objects (3b,c), adpositions (3d,e) and nominal constructions (3f). Missing in Nzadi is a fifth strategy, serial verb constructions, which will be become central in the discussion of the Bantoid developments discussed below.

While the historical changes that have taken place in Nzadi definitely give it a 'non-Bantu' feel, it is clear that Nzadi derives from a quite canonical Bantu type. Nzadi 'feels' like a simplified Bantu language rather than a Bantu language which has developed West African Benue-Congo characteristics (e.g. Nzadi does not have the 'serial verb constructions' attested in Cameroon). (Crane et al. 2011: 3–4)

In this study I will assume that (pre-) Proto-Bantoid was like Proto-Bantu (PB) in having verb extensions (causative, applicative, etc.), multiple objects, and very few—perhaps even only one—adposition.² This naturally raises the question of

²Only **na* 'with, and' can be confidently reconstructed for PB and early Niger-Congo.

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why synthetic head-marking languages like Kinande and Chichewa become analytic languages like Nzadi? That is, why do such languages undergo such a dramatic change of typology? As far as I know, there have been three proposals in the literature: The first is that the affixal morphology is lost through “processes of phonetic disintegration” (cf. the Sapir 1933[1949] quote at the beginning of the paper). Known as “erosion” (Heine & Reh 1984: 21–28) or “phonological attrition” (Lehmann 1985: 4) in the grammaticalization literature, the change in typology is an innocent by-product of natural sound changes, particularly phonetic weakening and loss at word edges: “The opposite historical directionality towards analyticity proceeds mostly by way of erosion and loss of phonological and morphological substance”. (Güldemann 2011: 129) The second explanation attributes the development of analyticity to contact and imperfect learning by L2 speakers, ultimately leading to creolization.

... we [should] at least consider that these [analytic] languages’ grammars were incompletely acquired at some point in their history. This is a known cause of analyticity, whereas the idea of generations of first-language speakers ‘dropping’ *all* of the affixes used by previous ones is peculiar at best and implausible at worst. (McWhorter 2011: 226)

Table 2: Syllable length of verb stems in Chichewa vs. Nzadi

	1 σ	2 σ	3 σ	4 σ	5 σ +	Totals
Chichewa	30 (1.4%)	650 (31%)	906 (43.2%)	477 (22.8%)	22 (1.1%)	2095
Nzadi	291 (83.9%)	51 (14.7%)	2 (0.6%)	1 (0.3%)	0 0%	347

In McWhorter’s account, phonetic erosion would have played little, if any role, in the development of the type of “radical analyticity” seen in Nzadi. The third account proposed in Hyman (2004) and subsequent papers is that morphology was lost as a result of imposing templatic constraints on stems (in this case, verb stems, which consist of a root + suffixes). Whereas PB did not have such limitations, the changes which took place included imposing a strong-weak structure highlighting the stem-initial CV and maximal size constraints on stems, which limited the ability of verb roots to occur with derivational suffixes. As will have been noted in (3), words are very short in Nzadi. Compare in Table 2, the number of verb stems having one to five syllables in Chichewa vs. Nzadi.³ As seen, the

³The numbers from Chichewa are based on a lexical database of 5,862 entries in Filemaker Pro™

vast majority of Nzadi verbs are monosyllabic, with most of the bisyllabic verbs consisting of relic derived forms, e.g. *def* ‘borrow’ → *defsa* ‘lend’ (< ‘cause to borrow’). That monosyllabicity is the endpoint of a gradual process of limiting stem size can be seen from the following continuum in NW Bantu:

- (4) a. four (~five) syllable maximum in Yaka (Hyman 1998), Bobangi (Whitehead 1899) Punu (Fontaney 1980, Blanchon 1995)
- b. three (~four) syllable maximum in Koyo (Hyman 2004), Eton (Van de Velde 2008)
- c. three-syllable maximum in Tiene (Ellington 1977), Basaa (Lemb & de Gastines 1973, Hyman 2003), Kukuya (Paulian 1975)
- d. two (~three) syllable maximum in Mankon [Grassfields Bantu (GB)] (Leroy 1982)
- e. one (~two) syllable maximum in Nzadi (Crane et al. 2011)

However, it is not just maximal stem size that is innovated, but also templatic prosodic constraints. This is most clearly seen in Tiene, which allows a maximally trisyllabic stem having the following properties (Ellington 1977, Hyman 2010):

- (5) a. five stem shapes: CV, CVV, CVCV, CVVCV, CVCVCV
- b. in the case of $C_1V_1C_2V_2C_3V_3$:
 - i. C_2 must be coronal
 - ii. C_3 must be non-coronal
 - iii. C_2 and C_3 must agree in nasality
 - iv. V_2 is predictable (with few exceptions)

The effects of prosodic constraints on morphology can be quite dramatic. Thus, the coronal + non-coronal constraint on C_2 and C_3 can result in infixation, as in (6b,c).

- (6) a. CB *-ik-* ‘stative’: *ból-a* ‘break’ → *ból-ek-ε* ‘be broken’
- b. CB *-is-* ‘causative’: *láb-a* ‘walk’ → *lāsab-a* ‘cause to walk’
- c. CB *-il-* ‘applicative’: *bák-a* ‘reach’ → *bá_lak-a* ‘reach for’

While McWhorter’s and my explanations both state that more needs to be involved than phonetic erosion, it is unlikely that the innovated infixation process in (6b,c) would have resulted from “incomplete acquisition”. Instead, as I argued

based on Scott & Hetherwick (1970) and tone-marked by Al Mtenje. The much smaller Nzadi lexicon of 1,035 entries can be found in (Crane et al. 2011: 281–298).

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in Hyman (2004), Niger-Congo languages become analytic by the stages outlined in (7).

- (7) a. start with a full set of (stacked) verb extensions (causative, applicative, etc.) and multiple objects
- b. size (and other prosodic) constraints come to be imposed: $4\sigma > 3\sigma > 2\sigma$ maximum
- c. such maximality constraints result in longer verbs not being able to take extensions
- d. to accommodate these verbs, analytic alternatives are favored (and created, if not preexistent)
- e. these alternatives come to be used even with shorter verbs, with extensions becoming less favored
- f. former valence-related extensions take on new, especially aspectual functions (e.g. various pluractional meanings), or drop out

Turning to Bantoid, as an example of (7f), causative *-sə* has become an iterative extension in Bangwa [GB, Bamileke; Cameroon] (Nguendjio 1989: 243) in (8), while several of the inherited verb extensions have taken on pluractional meanings in Kejom [GB, Ring subgroup; Cameroon] (Jisa 1977, Akumbu 2008) in (9).

- (8)

<i>sò</i>	‘laver’	→	<i>sò-sə</i>	‘laver plusieurs fois’
<i>fāk</i>	‘tourner’	→	<i>fāk-sə</i>	‘tourner plusieurs fois’
<i>cí-</i>	‘casser’	→	<i>cí-sə</i>	‘casser plusieurs fois’
<i>yàʔ</i>	‘couper’	→	<i>yàʔ-sə</i>	‘couper plusieurs fois’
<i>ghε</i>	‘partager’	→	<i>ghε-sə</i>	‘partager plusieurs fois’

- (9) a.

<i>tsɔʔɔ</i>	‘jump’
<i>tsɔʔ-mə</i>	‘jump one after the other’
<i>tsɔʔ-kə</i>	‘jump time and again’
<i>tsɔʔ-lə</i>	‘jump across things’
<i>tsɔʔ-tə</i>	‘jump gently’ (= attenuative)
- b.

<i>dì</i>	‘cry, cackle’
<i>dì-mə</i>	‘lots of children crying’
<i>dì-kə</i>	‘cry time and again’
<i>dì-lə</i>	‘lots of chickens cackling’

- c. *zhwí* 'kill'
zhwí-tə 'kill one by one, bit by bit'
zhwí-lə 'kill lots of people, one after the other'
- d. *sù* 'stab'
sù-tə 'stab lots of things one by one, or one thing many times'
sù-lə 'stab with lots of things at one time'

To summarize, major changes transformed an originally agglutinative proto language into much more analytic daughter languages in some of NW Bantu and Bantoid. As a result, non-Bantu Bantoid languages differ considerably from CB, as summarized in (3).

Table 3: Comparison of Canonical Bantu with Non-Bantu Bantoid

	Canonical Bantu	Non-Bantu Bantoid
phonology	minimum word = 2 syllables	maximum stem =mostly 2~3 syllables
morphology	highly synthetic, agglutinative	less so, gradual move towards analyticity
verb extensions	many, mostly marking valence	few, mostly marking aspect
unmarked objects	multiple	at most two, ultimate limitation to one per verb
object marking	head marking on verb	various prepositions and/or serial verbs [diversity!]
ditransitive verbs	a few (*pá 'give')	few or none

Having established that Proto-Bantoid had a range of verb extensions, I now consider the structures which have come to replace them in the daughter languages.

2 Analytic replacements of the lost Proto-Bantoid synthetic structure

In this section I examine what has replaced the verb extension system inherited by languages in the Bantoid area of Cameroon. In order to control the study, I focused exclusively on the marking of valence by head marking on the verb, specifically benefactives ('for someone'), recipients ('to someone') and instruments ('with something'). As will be seen, Bantoid languages either innovate adpositional phrases, serial verb constructions, or both. This therefore raises two questions. First, where did Bantoid languages get their prepositions (or, in a few cases, postpositions)? Recall that the proto language may have only had one preposition **na*, which occurs widely in Niger-Congo.

A feature common to languages that have obligatory applicatives and to languages that have the type of complex predicates presented in section 4.3.6 [serial verb constructions] is that, in comparison with other languages, they make only a very limited use of adpositions, since adpositions typically encode the semantic role of obliques, and both mechanisms result in giving the status of direct objects to various semantic types of complements that in other languages tend to be treated as obliques. (Creissels et al. 2008: 124)

The second question concerns how Bantoid languages developed their serial verb constructions (SVCs)? In order to investigate these questions, I decided to survey what has replaced the benefactive and recipient functions of the CB applicative extension *-il-* and the common *-an-* suffix which marks reciprocal in CB, but also instruments in Cameroonian NW Bantu:

- (10) a. Mokpe [A22] (Henson 2001)
 -sos- *-sos-an-*
 'wash' 'wash with'
- b. Akoose [A15C] (Hedinger 2008: 90)
 -kób- *-kób-en-*
 'catch' 'catch with'

From the available literature, aid of colleagues over email, and my own work, the goal was to fill out the following questionnaire for as many as possible of the ca. 100 Bantoid languages in this small area of Cameroon.

1. How are benefactives expressed? Which of the following are possible for the meaning 'he cooked rice for the child'?
 - a. DOUBLE OBJECT: "cook child rice"
 - b. BENEFACTIVE PREPOSITION: "cook rice for child" [if yes, what is the preposition?]
 - c. SERIAL VERB CONSTRUCTION: "cook rice give child"
2. How are recipients expressed? Which of the following are possible for the meanings 'he gave the child a book' or 'he sent/wrote the woman a letter'? [They are not necessarily the same]
 - a. DOUBLE OBJECT: "write woman letter", "give child book"
 - b. RECIPIENT PREPOSITION: "write letter to woman", "give book to child" [if yes, what is the preposition?]
 - c. COMITATIVE PREPOSITION: "write woman with letter", "give child with book" [if yes, what is the preposition?]
 - d. SERIAL VERB CONSTRUCTION: "write letter give woman", "take book give child"
3. How are instruments expressed? Which of the following are possible for the meaning 'he cut the meat with a knife'?
 - a. INSTRUMENTAL PREPOSITION: "cut meat with knife" [if yes, what is the preposition?]
 - b. SERIAL VERB CONSTRUCTION: "take knife cut meat"

The table in the Appendix presents findings from 27 languages. Concerning the marking of ditransitives (benefactives, recipients, instruments), the following generalizations were noted:

- (i) In all subareas there is at least some resistance to multiple objects, which are often restricted to only a few verbs.
- (ii) There is no applicative or instrumental valence-marking by verb extensions, whereas there are identifiable, though not necessarily productive causative extensions in many Bantoid languages.
- (iii) Virtually all of the flagging and word order strategies summarized by Malchukov et al. (2010) are found in this small area, e.g. both adpositions and serial verb constructions (SVCs), which represent different responses to the change from syntheticity to analyticity.

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As mentioned, Bantoid languages do retain verbs with recognizable causative suffixes. However, causative *-sə*, which corresponds directly to CB *-is-*, is usually restricted to intransitive roots due to the widespread resistance to double object constructions. In the few transitives that have been found with a causative extension, the verb does not become ditransitive:

- (11) a. Babungo
ηwá fêe zǝ ‘he was afraid of (i.e. feared) a snake’
mà fê-sǝ ηwá (nǝ zǝ) ‘I frightened him (with a snake)’
 (Schaub 1985: 211)
- b. Bafut
má shwiñi ηki ‘I am pouring water’
má shwiñi-sǝ ηki ‘I am making water to pour’
 (Bila 1986: 102)

While causative extensions are attested, reflexes of the CB applicative suffix *-il-* are virtually absent in the Bantoid area. One possible exception concerns six out of Ngum’s (2004) lexicon of 262 verbs in Meta [GB; Momo subgroup]:

- (12) *ghàb* ‘share’ *ghàb-ri* ‘share to’
cob ‘donate’ *cob-ri* ‘donate for’
sòm ‘cut’ *sòm-bi* ‘cut into’
wí ‘refund’ *wí-ri* ‘reply, refund to’
wub ‘crave’ *wub-ri* ‘crave for’
dii ‘pity’ *dii-ri* ‘pity for’

However, since *-ri* has other functions, it is not clear if this suffix is cognate with PB applicative **-il-*. The only other applicative I have found in the area comes from Vute (Mambiloid), which has innovated a new extension *-nà* from the main verb ‘to give’. “*-nà* is added to a verb to indicate that there is an indirect object or benefactive NP present in the clause. Its function is similar to a Bantu applicative extension in this way. *-nà* is derived from the verb *nà-ni* ‘to give’.” (Thwing 2006: 8) Table 4 summarizes the different constructions that replace former applicative and instrumental verb extensions.

Although some languages do maintain unmarked double objects, assumed to be inherited, the more pervasive strategies are to replace head marking with adpositions and/or SVCs, with subareal distributions (see below). Let us first consider prepositions, then serial verbs. As mentioned, the proto language had perhaps only one preposition, **na* ‘with’ whose various reflexes *nə*, *ni*, *ni*, *nɛ* may

Table 4: Benefactive, Recipient, and Instrumental Constructions in Bantoid

alignment	schema	Benefactive	Recipient	Instrument
neutral	verb + X + Y	<i>cook child rice</i>	<i>write woman letter</i>	
indirective	verb + X + [prep Y]	<i>cook rice for child</i>	<i>write letter to woman</i>	
secundative	verb + Y + [prep X]	<i>cook child with rice</i>	<i>write woman with letter</i>	<i>cut meat with knife</i>
co-verb (Y)	verb + X + [give Y]	<i>cook rice give child</i>	<i>write letter give woman</i>	
co-verb (X)	[take X] + verb + Y			<i>take knife cut meat</i>

Table 5: Possessive vs. Locative Agreement in Noni

a.	cl.3	<i>wáy</i>	<i>w-ém</i>	‘my market’	(‘at market of me’)
		<i>fǎ-wǎy</i>	<i>fǎ mē</i>	‘at my market’	
b.	cl.9	<i>jǎǎ</i>	<i>y-ǎ</i>	‘your sg. stream’	(‘in stream of you sg.’)
		<i>è-jǎǎ</i>	<i>jǎ wǎ</i>	‘in your sg. stream’	
c.	cl.9	<i>cǎn</i>	<i>y-è</i>	‘his/her hut’	(‘in hut of him/her’)
		<i>cǎn</i>	<i>dvū wvù</i>	‘in his/her hut’	

expand to take on all three functions ‘for’, ‘to’, and ‘with’, as in Limbum [Eastern GB] (Fransen 1995: 259):

- (13) a. *wìr bí fà? nì Tàrì*
 we FUT₀ work for lord
 ‘we will serve [work for] the Lord’
- b. *mě fā ηwà? nì mūū wǎ*
 I give-PERF book to child my
 ‘I have given a book to my child’
- c. *mě gwàr cī nì ndyàà*
 I cut-PERF tree with axe
 ‘I have cut the tree with an axe’

In other cases the source of the preposition is from a locative. Bantu languages have locative noun classes that condition agreement. These are also present in certain Bantoid languages, although not always easy to identify with PB. Thus, Noni [Beboid] *fǎ* in Table 5a is cognate with PB **pa*, while the other two locative noun classes in Table 5b,c have no known PB correspondence (Hyman 1981). A comparison of the possessor marking in these examples reveals that independent

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pronouns are used instead of possessive pronouns with the above locative classes, indicating that they are prepositions. I suggest that the same locative source is involved in the development of the widespread preposition *á ~ án* which comes to be used as a benefactive and/or recipient preposition, e.g. in Noni, where the synchronic reflex of **a* is [ɛ] (Hyman 1981: 80):

- (14) a. *mē nɔ́ ndɛ̀ɛ̀ wān bɛ̀ŋkǔ*
 I PERF.FOC cook child yams
 ‘I have cooked the child yams’
 b. *mē nɔ́ ndɛ̀ɛ̀ bɛ̀ŋkǔ ɛ̄ wān*
 I PERF.FOC cook yams for child
 ‘I have cooked yams for the child’

Assuming an earlier NP PREP NP structure explains the unusual verb + X + Y word order in Medumba [GB; Bamileke], which has lost the preposition **á*, but still uses the independent pronominal forms as “indirect object pronouns” (Voorhoeve 1976: 22):

- (15) a. *á ʔfá éʔé bó*
 he gave it them
 ‘he gave it to them’ (cf. direct object pronoun *yób* ‘them’)
 b. *a⁵ fɔ̄³ bum² bu³*
 he give egg dog
 ‘he gives an egg to the dog’ (Caroompas 2014: 2)

Two other areal developments can be noted from the data in the Appendix and compared with the accompanying map (Figure 1). First, in a contiguous area involving two subgroups of Grassfields Bantu (Eastern Grassfields and Momo), the benefactive/recipient preposition is reinforced by the noun ‘hand’ (cf. PB **bókò*); hence, ‘to the hand(s) of s.o.’ becomes a new, fuller preposition.⁴ Elizabeth Magba (pers.comm.) thus points out the following two possibilities in Mundani [GB; Momo]:

- (16) a. *tà tsaa àkate yu abua tò*
 s/he has-sent letter the to him/her
 ‘s/he has sent the letter to her/him’

⁴Note that Heine & Kuteva (2002: 166) have ‘hand’ > LOCATIVE, but not RECIPIENT.

- b. *tà tsaa a tò àkate yu*
 s/he has-sent to him/her letter the
 (idem)

The difference between examples [16a] and [16b] in terms of marking the recipient role has to do with a difference in focus: in [16a] *abua tò* (the recipient) is in focus, appearing in clause-final position; in [16b], *àkate yu* (the item sent...) is brought into focus by being shifted to the clause-final position.... The origin of *abua* variously translated as ‘to, for, from, with’ is likely to be the noun *àbu* ‘hand, arm’, possibly suffixed by the Class 7 genitive marker *-a*. (Elizabeth Magba, pers.comm.)

It is likely that Isu [GB; Ring] *áwò* ‘for’ (benefactive) derives from *á + kà-wó* ‘hand’ (with common prefix-deletion and tonal change) and that *áwò* subsequently developed into *â* ‘to’ (recipient) (Roland Kießling, pers.comm.):

- (17) a. *yú fàʔà áwò dòn k-ìy*
 3PL work.IPF for king 7-OF
 ‘they worked for the king’
 b. *ú kòʔ yè wè dzài yè â wè*
 3S.PST3 see CFG 3SG tell CFG to 3SG
 ‘s/he saw him/her and told him/her’

Locative *á* is implicated in the similar development of the benefactive and recipient preposition *â* in closely related Aghem [GB; Ring group] (Watters 1979: 152–8), but also marks instruments by itself (Hyman 1979: 45):

- (18) a. *á fíghàm* ‘on the mat’
á kíʔtú ‘on the head’
 b. *á fíʔñi* ‘with a knife’
á kíʔkəŋ ‘with a stirring stick’

The second areal development concerns a new instrumental preposition **bó* which replaces **na* ‘with’ in the North (Jukunoid, Yemne-Kimbi, Beboïd, Northern subbranch of Eastern Grassfields). As seen in the Noni examples in (19) *bó* is used with persons, instruments and secundative ‘give Y with X’:

- (19) a. *me ntóó bó wān*
 I come with child
 ‘I am bringing the child’

- b. *me nɔ̀ɔ̀ nsɛ̀ɛ̀ ñàm bó fɛ̀ñ̃ɔ̀*
 I PERF cut meat with knife
 ‘I have cut meat with a knife’
- c. *me cí ñá bɔ̀ɔ̀m bó kɛ̀ŋgɔ̀m*
 I PST₂ give children with plantains
 ‘I gave the children plantains’

Consistent with earlier speculations, the likelihood is that this preposition comes from the third person plural pronoun of the same shape: incorporative ‘they-with s.o.’ > associative ‘they-with sth.’ (‘they left they-with load of yams’) > instrumental ‘with’. “... perhaps *bó* ‘with’ comes from *bó* ‘they’.” (Hyman 1981: 81, re Noni) “This conjunction [*bó* ‘and’] is identical in form to the third person plural pronoun from which it is probably derived.” (Hedinger 2008: 72, re Akoose)⁵ The likely starting point is incorporative pronouns, widespread in this area, e.g. Akoose (Hedinger 2008: 73):

- (20) a. *bó awi mwaád*
 they his wife
 ‘he and his wife’ (i.e. they including his wife)
- b. *bó María*
 they Mary
 ‘s/he and Mary’ (i.e. they including Mary)
- c. *súmā*
 ‘s/he and I’ (lit. we-(s)he’)

A diachronic development of comitative > instrumental is a very common one cross-linguistically (Creissels & Voisin-Nougier 2008: 292). As seen in (21), both the new preposition < ‘they’ and inherited **na* form secundative *verb Y with X* in the North and Ring groups:

- (21) a. *mā fā wà bó ndi*
 I give you with water
 ‘I give you some water’
 (Koshin [Yemne-Kimbi]; Ousmanou 2014: 309)
- b. *mà kò Làmbí nà fā*
 I give Lambi with thing
 ‘I give something to Lambi’
 (Babungo [GB; Ring]; Schaub 1985: 60)

⁵Note that ‘and’ and ‘with’ are often expressed with the same morpheme in Bantu languages.

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It can be noted that no Bantoid language has secundative ‘Y with X’ without also having an alternative ‘X to Y’.

Leaving prepositions, another areal development is serial verb constructions (SVCs) which have also been innovated to express multiple arguments in Bantoid:

- (22) a. Benefactive ‘give’ (Bamun [GB; Nun])
nasha na malori mfa ne pon
 my.mother cook.PST rice give to children
 ‘my mother cooked rice for the children’ (Abdoulaye Nchare, pers.comm.)
- b. Benefactive ‘give’ (Mundani)
tà lè ląą èghidzi ńa abua tò
 she PST₃ cook food give to him
 ‘she cooked food for him’ (Elizabeth Magba, pers.comm.)
- c. Instrumental ‘take’ (Ngomba [GB; Bamileke])
n dǝk níi ń-kxuř? tú
 I take.PST machete CNS-cut tree
 ‘I cut the tree with a machete’ (Satre 2010: 60)

From the table in the Appendix, we can make the following observations concerning the distribution of SVCs: (i) ‘give’ and ‘take’ SVCs are definitely in the minority (see the numbers in the bottom row of the table); (ii) except for Mbe-mbe [Mambiloid] in the North and Ejagham [Ekoid Bantu] in the South, SVCs are found throughout the Grassfields area except the Ring group; (iii) although ‘give’ and ‘take’ SVCs are absent, Ring Grassfields Bantu exploits SVCs in other functions. This is extensively documented by Kießling (2011) for Isu and can also be seen in the following example from closely related Aghem (Hyman 1979: 204):

- (23) *sǝogǝ? vǝ ndùu nùńò èkǝ? zìghà mà?à tsùghò áwé, nùńò èndú*
 soldier that go leave ascend leave throw descend children leave go
ndùu kǝ? ndùu nùńò vǝ
 go see go woman that
 ‘the soldier went and abandoned his children and went to see the woman’

The absence of valence-related serial verbs in the Ring subgroup is consistent with Foley & Olson’s (1985) observation that SVCs are expected to be acquired in the specific order: motion/directional verbs > postural verbs > stative/process verbs > valence. “On the grammatical side, phonological attrition causes gradual

loss of the bound morphemes.... As this verbal morphological is lost, a new device for valence adjustment must be found. Verb serialization begins to be used in this function, *provided serial constructions already exist in the language.*" (Foley & Olson 1985: 51, my emphasis)

Concerning the order in which different valence SVCs are acquired, the present survey of Bantoid languages suggests two generalizations. First, 'give' SVCs are acquired before 'take' SVCs. Thus, Mfumte [EG; North] uses a 'give' SVC for benefactives, but a preposition *wá* 'with, to' instead of an instrumental 'take' SVC (Greg McLean, pers.comm.):

- (24) a. *yá tó fá mà nku*
 3SG call give 1SG chief
 's/he called the chief for me'
 b. *yá sí nya? wá mbyì*
 3SG cut meat with knife
 's/he cut meat with a knife'

Second, benefactive 'give' SVCs are acquired before recipient 'give' SVCs. Evidence for this has already been seen from Mundani (16a) 'send to' vs. (22b) 'cook give', repeated below (Elizabeth Magba, pers.comm.):

- (25) a. *tà tsaá àkate yu abua tò*
 s/he has-sent letter the to her/him
 's/he has sent the letter to her/him'
 b. *tà lè lya èghidzi ya abua tò*
 s/he PST₃ cook food give to her/him
 's/he cooked food for her/him'

Fe'fe' [GB; Bamileke] also supports the idea that 'give' is initially oriented towards the benefactive rather than the recipient (Hyman 1971; pers.notes):⁶

- (26) a. *à kà lách càk náh nsà? mbú à*
 3SG PST₂ take pot &take &come to me
 's/he brought the pot to me'
 b. *à kà lách càk náh nsà? hā ā*
 3SG PST₂ take pot &take &come give me
 's/he brought the pot for me'

⁶In these examples *náh* is a common simplification of *ndáh*, the consecutivized form of *láh* 'take'. The RECIPIENT marker *mbú* is derived from the plural 'hands'.

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- c. *à kà lách c̀àk náh nsà? hā mbú à*
3SG PST₂ take pot &take &come give to me
's/he brought the pot to me'
- d. *à kà lách c̀àk náh nsà? mbú à hā ā*
3SG PST₂ take pot &take &come to me give me
's/he brought the pot to me for me' (helped get the pot to me)

The Fe'fe' data underscore that there are alternatives—and combinations, e.g. 'verb + give + to'. In addition, there is a preposition *ma* 'with' which has the same functions as *lách* 'take' (Hyman 1971: 33–37).

- (27) a. *à kà fá? mà žínù*
3SG PST₂ work with intelligence
'he worked intelligently' (he worked with intelligence)
- b. *à kà lách žínù mfá?*
3SG PST₂ take intelligence &work
'he worked intelligently' (he took intelligence &worked)
- c. *à kà lách žínù náh mfā?*
3SG PST₂ take intelligence &take &work
'he worked intelligently' (he took intelligence &took &worked)

This leaves us with the question: Why do Bantoid (and other) languages develop multiple strategies in the passage from syntheticity to analyticity? I take this up in the final section.

3 Conclusion

In response to why languages might develop alternative analytic structures, first consider the use of serialized 'take' as a "linker" in Fe'fe' in (28).

- (28) a. *à' mfá? náh nghũ nkāa*
3SG work.PRES &take &make money
's/he works and thereby earns money'
- b. *à' ncēh náh njĩ?sī wū*
3SG read.PRES &take &learn thing
's/he reads and thereby learns'

As seen, I have translated ‘&take’ as ‘thereby’, since it refers back to a proposition, not to a noun phrase. This is something that *mà* ‘with’ cannot do. Besides its ability to express a wider range of semantic roles than the preposition ‘with’, ‘take’ can also acquire an aspectual function, e.g. marking completive aspect in Gwari, a Nupoid language of Nigeria (Hyman & Magaji 1970):

- (29) a. (present habitual)
wo si shnamá
3SG buy yam
‘s/he buys a yam’
- b. (present progressive)
wo si shnamá lo
3SG buy yam go
‘s/he is buying a yam’
- c. (present perfect)
wó lá shnamá si
3SG take yam buy
‘s/he has bought a yam’

However, I don’t think this is why SVCs develop. Rather, they originate as offering something different from the constructions with which they compete—and may ultimately replace. Much of the discussion concerned with defining SVCs has centered around how SVCs represent a single “event” (see Bohnemeyer et al. 2007, Bisang 2009 and references cited therein). However, speech communities differ in how much detail of an event they customarily express. Thus consider the function of ‘take’ as a “custody transfer” verb in Mungbam [Yemne-Kimbi] (Lovegren 2013):

- (30) a. *mā mū*
take.IRR drink.IRR
‘take and drink!’
[cup is within reach and at the level of the listener’s hands, in front of him]
- b. *mā já à mū*
take.IRR ascend.IRR 2SG.TOP drink.IRR
‘take and drink!’
[cup is on the floor and has to be “ascended”]

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c. *mū*

drink.IRR

‘drink!’

As Lovegren puts it:

In an event description of this type, the absence of a custody transfer coverb usually indicates that no custody transfer took place (because the theme was already in the agent’s custody at the outset of the event, because the action was performed without the agent taking custody, because the theme ceased to exist at the end of the event, etc.), and not that the custody transfer event is left unspecified. The only situation where a simple imperative *mū* ‘drink!’ is felicitous is a case where the addressee is already holding a drinking cup. (Lovegren 2013: 222)

This raises the question of whether there could be comparable distinctions in expressing multiple arguments, e.g. benefactives and instruments in the following situations, all representing a single event:

- (31) a. he cooked rice for child [the rice is still in the pot]
he cooked rice give child [the rice is in the child’s possession]
b. he cut meat with knife [the knife was in his hand prior to the cutting]
he took knife cut meat [the knife was not in his hand prior to the cutting]

A quite logical subsequent step would be for the SVCs in (31) to become the obligatory structure for expressing benefactives and instruments. Thus, in addition to Foley & Olson’s (1985) demonstration that valence marking SVCs develop last, languages that have developed benefactive, recipient and instrumental SVCs may be at different stages: those like Fe’fe’ which have alternate structures are “younger” serial verb languages than those like Mundani which lack prepositional alternatives.⁷ It is however likely that Bantoid developed its SVCs fairly recently. As I pointed out in earlier work (Hyman 1975: 139–141), the type of SVCs surveyed above are an areal phenomenon in West Africa. However, the Bantoid distribution suggests there are micro-areas, since within the area surveyed, valence-marking SVCs are restricted to Eastern Grassfields Bantu and Momo languages. Such discontinuities probably hold in other parts of the continent as well.

⁷This would of course suggest that more westerly Benue-Congo and Kwa languages which only have SVCs have had their serial verbs much longer.

To conclude, I would like to draw the perhaps obvious moral that some languages care about certain things more than others. That some languages such as Mungbam care more about expressing the individual components of an action than English is not a new observation. Consider in this connection what Pawley (1993: 87) notes about Kalam, a language of New Guinea: “Kalam speakers are markedly more analytic and explicit than speakers of European languages in their reporting of the action components of events” (Pawley 1993: 87). Kalam speakers thus say “food consume” for ‘eat’ and “water consume” for ‘drink’ (p.107) and have such elaborate SVC constructions as the following, which Pawley translates with one English verb (p.88):⁸

- (32) *pk wyk d ap tan d ap yap g-*
strike rub hold come ascend hold come descend do
‘to massage’

It is clear that different speech communities adopt different conventions for expressing similar events. While English has the compact verb “fetch”, other languages require a tripartite SVC “go take come”. Once a speech community starts to move in such an analytic direction the “drift” can on a life of its own. I would like to suggest a change in conversational conventions is not only responsible for the development of SVCs, but also for their areal diffusion: communities in contact borrow the speech styles of others, and thereby their grammar.

⁸Thanks to Woodbury (2015) for bringing Pawley (1993) to my attention. An example closer to home might be the expression of motion events in “satellite-framed” Germanic languages which encode more about manner than “verb-framed” Romance languages (Talmy 1991, Slobin 2003).

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Table 6: Benefactive, dative & instrumental structures in Cameroonian Bantoid

Language	Group	BENEFACTIVE			RECIPIENT			INSTRUMENT			Source		
		V Y X	X for Y	V X give Y	V Y X	X to Y	Y with X	V X give Y	V X with Y	take Y V X			
1 Mbembe	Jukunoid	+	ké	+	(1)	+	ké	wò	+	(1)	wò	-	Richter (2015)
2 Mungbam	Yemne-Kimbi	- ?	á ... ná	- ?	- ?	- ?	á ... ná	bɛ, bɔ̃ (7)	- ?	- ?	bɛ, bɔ̃	-	Lovegren (2013)
3 Mundabli	Yemne-Kimbi	-	í	-	-	-	í ... lá	á	-	-	á	-	Rebecca Voll
4 Koshin	Yemne-Kimbi	-	-lɔ̃	-	-	-	-lɔ̃	bɔ̃	-	-	bɔ̃	-	Ousmanou (2014)
5 Noni	Beboïd	+	ɛ, -lé (8)	-	-	-	ɛ	bɔ̃	-	-	bɔ̃	-	Hyman (1981)
6 Mfumte	EG-North	+	-	+	(1)	+	wá	-	+	+	wá	-(2)	Greg McLean
7 Yamba	EG-North	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	bɔ̃	-	Nassuna (2001)
8 Limbum	EG-North	-	nì	-	-	-	nì	-	-	-	nì	-	Frausen (1995)
9 Bamun	EG-Nun	-	nə	+	nə (3)	+	nə	-	+	(3)	nə	+	Abdulaye Nchare
10 Medumba	EG-Bamileke	-(5)	-	-	-	+(5)	-	-	-	-	búù	-(2)	Ariane Ngabeu
11 Fe'fe'	EG-Bamileke	+	mbú	+	+	+	mbú	-	+	mbú	má	+	Hyman (1971)
12 Ngomba	EG-Bamileke	-	-	+	mbɔ̃ (3)	+	mbɔ̃	-	-	-	né	+	Satre (2004, 2010)
13 Bambahang	EG-Bamileke	-	-	-	-	-	nì	á mbó	- ?	-	nì	- ?	Wright (2009)
14 Mankon	EG-Ngamba	- ?	nì	+	+	- ?	nì, á mbó	- ?	-	-	nì	- ?	Leroy (2007)
15 Mundani	Momo	-	-	+	abua (3)	-	abua, á	-	-	-	-	+	Elizabeth Magba
16 Babungo	Ring-South	-	tí	- ?	- ?	-	tí	nə	- ?	- ?	nə	- ?	Schaub (1985)
17 Kejom	Ring-Central	-	á	-	-	-	á	nə	-	-	nə	-	Pius Ajumbu
18 Kom	Ring-Central	-	sə	-	-	-	sə	nə	-	-	nə	-	Blasius Chiatoh
19 Aghem	Ring-West	-	á	-	-	-	á	-	-	-	á(n) (6)	-	Hyman (1979)
20 Isu	Ring-West	-	áwɔ̃	-	-	-	á	nə	-	-	nə	-	Roland Kießling
21 Esimbi	Tivoid?	-	ɔ̃hə kV	-	+	+	ɔ̃hə kV	-	-	-	ótə	-	Brad Koenig
22 Tiv	Tivoid	-	shá	+	+	+	shá	-	-	-	shá, á	-	Abraham (1940)
23 Kenyang	Mamfe	-	n̄tá, t̄kɔ̃	- ?	- ?	+	n̄tá	-	-	-	n̄tá	-	Tanyi Eyongetah
24 Ejaghám	Ekoid	+	mbá	+	+	+	mbá	-	+	+	ná	+	John Watters
25 Akoose	Bantu A10	+(9)	áyáɔ̃lè	-	-	+	wé	-	-	-	ne (9)	-	Hedinger (2008)
26 Tikar	Tikar	+	-	+	+	+	lè	-	-	-	lè	-	Stanley (1991)
27 Vute	Mambiloïd	-	-	-	+(10)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Thwing (2006)
totals:		7	16	6	11	22	8	5	24	5			

Notes on Table 6

In Table 6, “+” means the language has the construction (which can be general or limited to certain verbs); “-” means it doesn’t have it; blank = no info; “EG” = Eastern Grassfields

- (1) The Mfumte and Mbembe structure is *V give Y X* + resumptive ‘with’;
- (2) The Mfumte and Medumba structure is *take X cut Y with(it)*, two events.
- (3) The Bamun, Ngomba and Mundani structure is *V X give to Y*;
- (4) The Bamun structure is *take X cut Y with(it)* = one event.
- (5) The Medumba order is *V X Y* (the *Y* is from a PP, *X*, *Y* pronouns are distinct).
- (6) Aghem *á(n)* is the general locative preposition, used also with instruments (but not comitatives, which use *à*);
- (7) Mungbam *Y* with *X* also used for BEN.
- (8) In Noni, *ē* means ‘to s.o.’ or ‘for s.o.’s benefit’, while the locative suffix *-lé* means ‘for s.o.’ (in s.o.’s stead).
- (9) Akoose has productive verb extensions: applicative *-e* producing *V-e Y X* and an *-en* instrumental verb extension producing *V-en X Y* (*Y* = the instrument NP).
- (10) Vute has an applicative extension *-ná* from the verb ‘to give’.

Abbreviations

ASP	aspect	PASS	passive
ANTICAUS	anticausative	PB	Proto-Bantu
APPL	applicative	PERF	perfect(ive)
CAUS	causative	PL	plural
CB	Canonical Bantu	PRES	present
CFG	centrifugal	PST	past
CNS	consecutive	REC	reciprocal
FOC	focus	REFL	reflexive
FUT	future	REL	relative
GB	Grassfields Bantu	REV	reversive
INFL	inflection	SBJV	subjunctive
INST	instrumental	SG	singular
IPF	imperfective	SM	subject marker
IRR	irrealis	SVC	serial verb construction
NP	noun phrase	TNS	tense
OM	object marker	TOP	topic marker

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