

Locatives and biclausal progressives in Wolof

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Introduction. It has been noted that progressive constructions are often biclausal, consisting of a locative clause with a nominalized clausal complement/adjunct (Comrie 1978, Bybee et. al. 1994, Mateu & Amadas 1999, Polinsky & Comrie 2002, Laka 2006, Salanova 2007, Coon 2010). In this paper we discuss the syntax of constructions in Wolof (Niger-Congo) which contain the element *a-ngi*, most commonly interpreted as the progressive marker. We (i) argue that *a-ngi* does not denote progressive aspect, but is a bimorphemic element consisting of the *A'*-complementizer *a* and a locative clitic *ngi*; (ii) show that *a-ngi* occurs in locative clauses, and that those are one of the building blocks of progressive structures; and (iii) propose that progressives in Wolof are biclausal, with one important difference when compared to better known cases from other languages – they do not contain a nominalized clause, but an imperfective infinitival clause.

The marker *a-ngi*. All finite indicative clauses in Wolof contain an overt complementizer, often said to encode different aspectual or information-structural properties. One of the elements that occupies the C position is *a-ngi*, commonly considered to be the progressive morpheme (e.g. Torrence 2005, 2012), as it occurs in default progressive clauses (in (1)). Interestingly, there is a difference between posture verbs and all other types of verbs in the *a-ngi*-clauses, such that the latter require the obligatory presence of the imperfective morpheme *di* to yield the progressive meaning, in (1), whereas structures with posture verbs cannot contain *di*, shown in (2).

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|-----|----------------|--------------|-------|-----|-----------------|---------|-------|
| (1) | Ma-a-ngi | di (>mangiy) | lekk. | (2) | Ma-a-ngi | (*di) | toog. |
| | 1SG-C-LCL | IMPF | eat | | 1SG-C-LCL | (*IMPF) | sit |
| | “I am eating.” | | | | “I am sitting.” | | |

Since posture predicates are commonly used to predicate location (Newman 2002), sentences as (2) can also be understood as locative structures. Furthermore, *a-ngi*-clauses are also used in verbless locative clauses which do not have progressive meaning, as in (3). They also cannot contain *di*.

- (3) Tééré ba-a-ngi (*di) ci taabal bi.
book the-C-LCL (*IMPF) on table the
“The book is on the table.”

(2) and (3) cast doubt on the classification of *a-ngi* as a progressive marker. We argue that *a-ngi* is a bimorphemic element, consisting of a C and a locative clitic, and that progressive sentences are biclausal structures, consisting of a locative clause and an infinitival imperfective clause.

***a-ngi* is bimorphemic.** We show that *a-ngi* contains the *A'*-movement complementizer (*l*)*a*. (*L*)*a* is found in *wh*-constructions and exhibits a subject/non-subject asymmetry, surfacing as *a* in local subject, and as *la* in non-subject extraction (Torrence 2005, 2012; Martinović 2013, 2015, 2017). This form of C is obligatory in any long-distance *A'*-movement, and occurs in all intermediate C positions. Extraction out of an embedded clause bearing any other C is impossible (Dunigan 1994). Evidence that locative clauses contain the *A'*-complementizer comes from the fact that, when embedded, they can be extracted out of, as in (4).

- (4) Lan **l-a** Demba wax ni mu-**a-ngi** ci taabal bi?
what *l*-C_{Wh} Demba say that 3SG-C_{wh}-LCL on table the.SG
“What did Demba say was on the table?”

Long-distance extraction out of an embedded clause with a different C, as the one in (5) (*na*), is impossible; (*l*)*a* is obligatory, as in (6).

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|-----|----------------------------------|------|-------------------------|-------|-----|-------------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------|------|------------------------|
| (5) | Demba wax-na-∅ | ni | lekk-na-ñu | ceeb. | (6) | Lan _i l-a | Demba wax | l-a-ñu | lekk | <i>t_i</i> ? |
| | Demba say-C _V -3SG | that | eat-C _V -3PL | rice | | what <i>l</i> -C _{Wh} | Demba say | <i>l</i> -C _{Wh} -3SG | eat | <i>t_i</i> |
| | “Demba said that they ate rice.” | | | | | “What did Demba say that they ate?” | | | | |

We propose that the other component of *a-ngi* is a locative clitic (LCL) *ngi*, on a par with similar elements in locative existentials in Romance languages (French *y* ‘there’, Spanish *-y*, Catalan *hi*; Freeze 1992). (E.g. French *Il y a un livre sur le table*. “There is a book on the table.”) Locative clitics in existentials in

Romance seem to be redundant elements, cooccurring with other locative pronouns or PPs. In Wolof, *ngi* occurs immediately to the right of C, where all Wolof pronominal clitics cluster (Russell 2006). Another reason to believe that *ngi* is a pronominal element is that it encodes proximity (*ngi* = proximal; *nga* = distal), like other demonstratives and determiners; e.g. the regular locative clitic, which occurs in any other context (and can occur in locative sentences as well) is *fi* when proximal and *fa* when distal.

Clauses with *a-ngi*. We propose the following structures for the two clause-types. The monoclausal locative has a null predicate or a posture verb and can take a PP adjunct. The biclausal progressive consists of the locative clause and an infinitival imperfective clause either as a complement or as an adjunct (Laka 2006, Coon 2010; more research is needed to determine the best analysis for Wolof).

First, (7) illustrates an imperfective infinitival complement, showing that its structure corresponds to the proposed clausal complement in progressives, in that it also contains the imperfective *di*.

- (7) Musaa wáy-na-∅ [TP PRO_i [AspP di [VP lekk sukar]]].
 Moussa continue-C-3SG [TP PRO_i [AspP IMPF [VP eat sugar]]]
“Moussa continues eating sugar.”

The structure for locative and progressive clauses is given in (8) and (9).

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|---|---|
| <i>Monoclausal locatives</i> | <i>Biclausal progressives</i> |
| (8) [CP Ma-a- <i>ngi</i> [VP ∅ <i>fi</i>]]
[CP 1SG-C _{Wh} -LCL [VP V here]]
<i>“I am here.”</i> | (9) [CP Ma _i -a- <i>ngi</i> [VP ∅] [TP PRO _i [AspP di [VP fi ^{ew}]]]]
[CP 1SG-C-LCL [VP V] [TP PRO _i [AspP IMPF [VP come]]]]
<i>“I am coming.”</i> |

One piece of evidence for biclausality is the position of PP verbal modifiers, such as ‘in fear’, which can only follow and never precede the verb, as shown in the verb focus sentences with a different C in (10).

- (10) a. Da-ma lekk ci tiitange.
do.C_V-1SG eat in fear
“I ATE in fear.”
 b. *Da-ma ci tiitange lekk.
do.C_V-1SG in fear eat

In progressives, the PP modifier either follows the verb or precedes *di*, as in (11). We take the fact that the PP modifier can precede the progressive verb to mean that it modifies a higher verb – the null locative predicate. This indicates that the verb *lekk* is contained in a separate VP.

- (11) a. Ma-a-*ngi* [di lekk] ci tiitange.
1SG-C_{Wh}-LCL IMPF eat in fear
“I am eating in fear.”
 b. Ma-a-*ngi* ci tiitange [di lekk].
1SG-C_{Wh}-LCL in fear IMPF eat
“I am in fear, eating.”

The locative clause in a progressive structure can also contain a posture predicate, as in (12)-(13).

- (12) Ma-a-*ngi* jaaxaan (ci jaaxaan) di lekk.
1SG-C_{Wh} lay.on.back in fear IMPF eat
“I’m laying on my back eating.”
 (13) Ma-a-*ngi* di lekk, jaaxaan.
1SG-C_{Wh} IMPF eat lay.on.back
“I’m eating, laying on my back.”

(12)-(13) show that this is not a verb linking construction, like in comparative or restructuring contexts (e.g. Baglioni 2012), since these structures involve a verbal linking morpheme *-a-*, which, in addition to the negative suffix *-ul*, is the only element able to intervene between the verbs. In progressives, as in (12), other material can intervene: it is possible to insert the PP modifier after *jaaxaan*. (13) shows that if the order of the predicates is reversed, the posture verb has to be separated from the clause by a pause and is interpreted as an afterthought, indicating that it is probably right-dislocated. Crucially, there is no such pause before the infinitival clause in (11b) and (12), which leads to the conclusion that the posture verb is in the predicate position of the locative clause.

Conclusion. In this paper we reanalyze the Wolof marker *a-ngi* as a bimorphemic element, consisting of C and a locative clitic. We also show that progressive sentences are biclausal constructions, employing locative clauses. Our analysis provides further cross-linguistic support for the biclausality of progressive structures and enriches the typology by uncovering variation in the type of adjunct/complement a locative clause can take.