

**ON THE VERBAL SYSTEM IN LANGI
A BANTU LANGUAGE OF TANZANIA (F.33)***

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This paper presents the Langi verbal system and the various ways in which tense, aspect and mood are encoded. Through a description of the structures and uses of the various forms, it attempts to demonstrate how the different conjugations fit together to form a coherent whole, morphologically and semantically, and how in some cases the system has been influenced by surrounding Cushitic languages.

1. Introduction.

Langi¹ (Rangi in Swahili) is a Bantu language spoken by approximately 300,000 people in the Kondo Region of Tanzania. It is of interest linguistically, as its speakers have long been surrounded by non Bantu-speaking communities. In this paper I will show that this has not been without consequences for the language, as evidenced by certain areal features.

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¹ This language is relatively unknown to linguistics: when I began studying it in 1996, the only published work dated from 1916 (by Otto Dempwolff). The data presented here is all first hand, and was gathered during fieldwork I carried out in Tanzania during my doctoral studies, the funding for which was provided by the LACITO-CNRS. Oliver Stegen of SIL has started working on the language recently; so far he has presented a paper on the vowel system at CALL (Leiden) in 2000, and has published a paper on derivation (2002). A monograph on Langi is in press, see Dunham, in press.

This paper presents the verbal system of Langi as it is spoken in the towns of Kondo and Pahi. Through the description of the structures and uses of the various verb forms, I will attempt to demonstrate how the different conjugations fit together to form a coherent whole, morphologically and semantically. I will begin with a brief presentation of the three types of elements which enter into verbal constructions in Langi: verb forms, copulative verbs and infinitival forms. I will then proceed to present the conjugations attested in the language.

1.1. Verb forms. The verb form in Langi, and in Bantu languages in general, is composed of several elements. These elements are not all necessarily present in a given verb form, but always appear in a fixed order. In Langi, a verb form may contain up to seven elements, which can be represented as follows.

(1)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	negative	subject	TAM	-object,	RAD	extensions	TAM
	pre- <i>px</i> ²	<i>px</i>	TAM	reflexive			

Minimal forms contain only a radical and a suffix. This corresponds to the imperative (see section 2.18 below).

(2)	<i>d</i> ma ³	‘go!’
	<i>d</i> m -a	
	go -imp2sg	

Maximal forms contain seven elements.

² Abbreviations used in this paper are as follows. **ADV** advisory; **APPL** applicative extension; **ASC** associative extension; **AUX** auxiliary; **CAUS** causative extension; **CONN** connective; **COP** copula; **DEC** decisional; **DEICT** deictic; **DEM** demonstrative; **DET** determinative; **DP** dependant nominal prefix; **HAB** habitual; **IMP** imperative; **INF** infinitive; **INJ** injunctive; **INV** = inevitable; **IP** independant nominal prefix; **lit** literally; **LOC** locative suffix; **n/a** not applicable; **NAR** narrative; **NEG** negative; **NEUT** neutral extension; **OBJ** object marker; **PASS** passive extension; **pers.com.** personal communication; **PFT** perfect; **PFV** perfective; **PERS** personal pronoun; **PFX** prefix; **PL** plural; **POSS** possessive; **P.PFX** negation pre-prefix; **PRES** presentative; **PROG** progressive; **RAD** radical; **REFL** reflexive; **REL** relator; **SFX** suffix; **SG** singular; **SP** subject prefix; **STAT** stative extension; **SUB** subjunctive; **TAM** tense-aspect-mood marker; **V** verb. Numbers in glosses refer to noun classes.

³ Tones will not be marked on examples. Tonal distinctions in Langi, particularly at the grammatical level, are so restricted that not marking them in this study does not affect the analysis.

(3) siviiovasomera tuku 'They are not reading to them.'

si - va - iyo - va - som -er -a tuku
 p.pfx - sp2 - prog - obj2 - read -appl -prog neg

Position 1. The first element in the verb form is the negative pre-prefix *si*. Its presence negates the verb form. Negative forms are generally accompanied by the adverb *tuku* at the end of the sentence. This is the only negative marker in the verb form, the suffix, for example, never being modified. We will see in sections 2.20 and 2.21 that imperatives and subjunctives are negated in a different manner.

Position 2. The second element in the verb form is the subject prefix. With the exception of imperatives, where the person is marked in the 7th position, a subject prefix in the second position is obligatory. The subject prefixes most frequently encountered in this paper will be the person prefixes. Below is a table showing the prefixes as they appear when followed by a consonant.

(4)	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
1	ni-	tu-
2	u-	mu-
3	a-	va-

When followed by a vowel, the forms vary somewhat: the prefix vowel either drops (as in example (3) above) or elides, depending on the articulatory nature of the two vowels in contact and also depending on the nature of the following morpheme. In general, when the prefix vowel is altered, the following vowel is lengthened. The rules governing vowel contact may be found in Dunham (forthcoming).

The subject prefix for the 1st person singular has several distinct variants: it is *ni-* in verb forms, but when prefixed to the copula *-ri*, it is *nde-* in the affirmative and *ndu-* in the negative.

(5) nkadzɛŋga numba 'I built a house.'

ni -ka -dʒɛŋg -a n -umba
 sp1sg -nar -build -nar ip9 -house

- (6) ndɛɾɪ muhindʒa, sindurɪ mutavana tuku 'I'm a girl, I'm not a boy.'
 ndɛ -ɾɪ mu -hindʒa si -ndu -ɾɪ mu -tavana tuku
 splsg -cop ip1 -girl p.pfx-splsg -cop ip1 -boy neg

The subject prefix for the 3rd person singular is *a-* (∅ before a vowel) in all cases except preceding the habitual marker *-ɔ-* where it is *y-*.

- (7) akadʒɛŋga ɲumba 'He built a house.'
 a -ka -dʒɛŋg-a ɲ -umba
 sp1 -nar -build -nar ip9 -house
- (8) yɔɔdɔma ndʒiriɪ 'He goes on the path.'
 y -ɔ -dɔm -a n -dʒira -i
 sp3sg -hab -go -hab ip9 -path -loc

Position 3. The third position contains tense-aspect-mood markers. These will be largely discussed in the following sections. In brief, conjugations in the verb forms are determined by the elements present in the third and the seventh positions (in the case of the imperative and the subjunctive, by a null marker in the 3rd position). In example (5) above, one can see that I have given the same gloss (nar) to the elements found in what corresponds to the 3rd and 7th positions of the verb form. In the representation of the verb form (at the beginning of this section), there are two sets of elements appearing in the 3rd position as one TAM marker, since *tɔ* may combine with other TAM markers in this position. This phenomenon will be discussed below, in section 2.8.

Position 4. This position contains object and reflexive markers. Object marking is relatively limited in Langi, and is mostly, but not exclusively, reserved for beneficiaries. See for example (3), (38), (39), (81). The reflexive marker *-i-*, roughly speaking, indicates that the situation applies to the subjects themselves, and is widely encountered in Langi. See for example (20), (21), (74), (104).

Position 5. This position contains the verb radical. The most common structure in Langi is *-CVC-*, however many other structures are encountered, such as *-VC-*, *-VCVC-*, etc.

Position 6. This position contains extensions, which modify the valency of the verb. The most common are the applicative (3), (20), the passive (102), (106) and the causative (45). Several extensions may be present in a given verb form (20), (106).

- (12) *twiidza vumbi* 'We used to be singers.'
 tu -idza va -mb -i
 sp1pl -cop ip2 -sing -sfx
- (13) *kwiidza kɪfaka aha ndzi vi* 'There used to be woods just right here.'
 ku -idza kɪ -ɬfaka aha ndzi vi
 sp17 -cop ip7 -woods dem16 deict only
- (14) *sikwiidza kɪfaka tuku* 'There didn't used to be woods.'
 si -ku -idza kɪ -ɬfaka tuku
 p.pfx -sp17 -cop ip7 -woods neg

In verbal compounds, *-idza* combines with inflected verbs. In some cases, it bears the pre-stem aspect marker *-a-* (see sections 2.16 and 2.18).

1.3 Infinitival forms. The infinitival forms found in verbal constructions show two structures, either *RAD-a* or *ku-RAD-a*, where *ku-* is the class 15 prefix which marks all verbo-nominal forms of verbs. The choice between the form with or without the class 15 prefix is based upon how closely bonded, semantically, the two verbal elements are. In Hadermann (1996: 159), it is mentioned that in the languages under study the infinitive sometimes lacks a prefix. She attributes this to morphological factors (whether or not the radical is vowel initial), but says the conditioning may also depend on the syntactic status of the verbo-nominal form within the utterance.

In Langi the difference is independent of the radical initial, and is fully distinctive. For example, there are two future tenses (which will be examined in detail in section 2.19), distinguished by the presence or absence of the class 15 prefix.

- (15) *sakaata turi* 'We are about to hunt.'
 sakaat -a tu -ri
 hunt -sfx sp1pl -cop
- (16) *kusakaata turi* 'We will hunt.' (At some indeterminate future time.)
 ku -sakaat -a tu -ri
 ip15 -hunt -sfx sp1pl -cop

In (15) the form corresponds to an immediate future, something that is about to happen, and in (16) the form corresponds to an indeterminate future.

The same structural distinction is found for example when the infinitival form functions as direct object.

(17) *vɔɔsaka vina* ‘They always want to dance / they adore dancing.’

va -ɔ -sak -a vin -a
sp2pl -hab -want -hab dance -sfx

(18) *vɔɔsaka kuvina* ‘They want to dance.’

va -ɔ -sak -a ku -vin -a
sp2pl -hab -want -hab ip15 -dance -sfx

In example (17), wanting to dance is part of the subjects’ personality, a permanent feature, whereas in (18) it is a passing fancy. We will see more examples of this phenomenon in section 2.10.

Now that we have had a look at the different elements involved, let us turn to the conjugations in which they are used.

2. Conjugations

Table 1 is a list of the conjugations which I have observed in Langi. Where applicable, negative forms are indicated by the pre-prefix in parentheses (*si-*) or, where the pre-prefix does not apply, by the independent form following the affirmative form(s) to which it applies.

It can be seen from this list that the Langi verbal system, like that of most Niger-Congo languages (Welmers 1973: 344), makes use of both ‘simple’ verb forms and verbal constructions. Several features however are atypical in comparison to Proto-Bantu or even to most East African Bantu languages. The most striking is the future formation /infinitive + auxiliary/ which runs counter to Greenberg’s prediction (1966: 84) that languages where the usual word order is verb-object (VO) also tend to show the the word order /auxiliary + infinitive/.

Table 1: Langi Verb Conjugations

<i>Form</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Abbreviation</i> ⁴
(si-)sp-iyɔ-RAD-a	Progressive	prog
(si-)sp-ɔ-RAD-a	Habitual	hab
(si-)sp-a-RAD-a	Perfect	pft
(si-)sp-a-RAD-irɛ	Perfective	pfv
(si-)sp-a sp-a-RAD-a	Anterior perfect	pft pft
(si-)sp-a sp-a-RAD-irɛ	Anterior perfective	pfv pfv
sp-ɛndɔ-RAD-a	Inevitable	inv
sp-tɔ-RAD-a	Decisional	dec
(si-)sp-ka-RAD-a ⁵	Narrative	nar
sp-ɾɪ (ku-)RAD-a ⁶	Narrative present	n/a
ku-RAD-a sp-a-ɾɪ	Narrative past progressive	n/a
sp-a-ɾɪ sp-iyɔ-RAD-a	Dynamic past progressive	n/a
sp-a-ɾɪ sp-ɔ-RAD-a	Dynamic past habitual	n/a
(si-)sp-idʒa sp-ɔ-RAD-a	Stative past habitual	n/a
sp-idʒa sp-a-RAD-a	Stative past perfect	n/a
sp-idʒa sp-a-RAD-a	Stative far past perfect	n/a
sp-a-idʒa (si-)sp-a-RAD-irɛ	Stative past perfective	n/a
(si-)sp-a-idʒa sp-a-RAD-irɛ	Stative far past perfective	n/a
(ku)-RAD-a sp-ɾɪ	Future	n/a
si-sp-ɾɪ RAD-a	Negative future	n/a
RAD-a	Imperative 2sg	imp2sg
RAD-ɛ	Imperative 1pl	imp1pl
RAD-i	Imperative 2pl	imp2pl
sp-RAD-ɛ	Subjunctive	sub
sp-ka-RAD-a	Advisory	adv
sp-ka-RAD-ɛ	Injunctive	inj
apa ku-RAD-a / ku-RAD-a tuku	Negative imperative	n/a

⁴ In compound forms, each component has its specific abbreviation (such as cop for ‘copula’).

⁵ This form is identical to the Advisory. They are only distinguished by the context in which they are used (narratives vs. direct speech), and not for example by tone: the tones are identical.

⁶ On the presence vs. absence of *ku-*, see the discussion of examples (15) through (18) above.

However, Langi is not alone in presenting such atypical word order. It is also found in several other Bantu languages, such as Mbugwe (F.34, Mous 2000, 2004), Gusii (E.42, Whiteley 1960), Kuria (E.43, Whiteley, 1955), and a number of languages from the zones B.40-B.50 and H.10-H.30 (Hadermann, 1996).

It is highly probable that the counter-universal structures in Langi were calqued on surrounding Southern Cushitic languages, the most likely candidates being Burunge and Alagwa (Mous, pers. com.). Further indication of influence from these languages is the fact that there are no clear distinctions between degrees of past in Langi.⁷ We will see in the following paragraphs that many conjugations can only incidentally be interpreted as past tenses, and that in most cases, the past is indicated by a distinct copula, which precedes the verb form. This situation is contrary to what is found in most Bantu languages (although comparable to what is found in Standard Swahili, Nurse 2000a: 249), as well as in Proto-Bantu, but closely resembles Southern Cushitic where aspectual distinctions are much more central than temporal ones (Nurse 2000b: 524). Furthermore, the only clear temporal distinctions are expressed in verbal constructions, whereas most aspectual and modal distinctions are expressed directly in the verb form.

2.1 Progressive: (si-)sp-iyɔ-RAD-a. The progressive indicates a process which is on-going at the time of speech. It is often used to signify that one is in the middle of doing something, and therefore unable to respond to a demand.

(19) *niiyɔluusika* ‘I’m talking’

ni -iyɔ -luus -ik -a
 sp1sg -prog -talk -neut -prog

(20) *siiyɔseyə kintu tuku, iiyɔkiriirikana*
 ‘He isn’t saying anything, he’s thinking.’

si -a -iyɔ -sey -a kɪ -ntu tuku
 p.pfx -sp1 -prog -say -prog ip⁷ -thing neg
a -iyɔ -k⁸ -i -r -ir -ik -an -a
 sp1 -prog -k -refl -think -appl -neut -asc -prog

⁷ Or at least in the dialect spoken in the towns of Kondoa and Pahi. I have been told by Nurse that Stegen has found several distinct pasts, however, as Stegen’s aim is to establish a ‘pan-Langi’ orthography, he has not distinguished between the various dialects.

⁸ This consonant is inserted to avoid the merging of the two vowels. It is not part of the reflexive or the radical, the form in the infinitive is *kwiirikana* ‘to think’.

- (21) vasiŋga siviyyɔkivaa tuku, viiyɔbwɪta
 ‘The children aren’t fighting, they’re playing.’

va -siŋga si -va -iyɔ -k -i -va -a tuku va -iyɔ -bwɪt -a
 ip2 -child p.pfx -sp2 -prog -k -refl -hit -prog neg sp2 -prog -play -prog

The progressive is never used with stative verbs. For a state current at the time of speech, either the habitual, the perfect or the perfective is used. For example the verb *kɔɔfa* ‘to be afraid’ is usually conjugated in the habitual (*nɔɔkɔɔfa ndʒɔka* ‘I am afraid of snakes / I fear snakes’), whereas the verb *kuvɪha* ‘to be bad’ is usually conjugated in the perfect (*naavɪha* ‘I am bad’).

2.2 Habitual: (si-)sp-ɔ-RAD-a. The habitual is mostly used to describe situations that are characteristic of an extended period of time, to express recurrent events, statements of general truth. It is used for example to describe what one does in life, but, contrary to the progressive, does not stress that something is on-going at the time of speech.

The habitual shares many features with the perfect (see below), the difference being that the habitual does not refer to an earlier situation, and is mostly used with dynamic verbs, whereas the perfect is commonly used with both dynamic and stative verbs.

- (22) nɔɔrɪma ‘I farm / I’m a farmer.’

nɪ -ɔ -rɪm -a
 sp1sg -hab -farm -hab

- (23) ntʃʊŋgula yɔɔrya ndʒʊʊ ‘The hare eats beans.’

n -tʃʊŋgula ɪ -ɔ -ry -a n -dʒʊʊ
 ip9 -hare sp9 -hab -eat -hab ip10 -beans

- (24) siŋɔɔtɛrɛka tuku
 ‘I don’t cook/ I’m not the one who cooks in our house.’

si -nɪ -ɔ -tɛr -ɛk -a tuku
 p.pfx -sp1sg -hab -cook -neut -hab neg

(25) sivɔɔtɛma lukwi tuku ‘They are not cutting wood.’

si -va -ɔ -tɛm -a lu -kwi tuku
p.pfx -sp2 -hab -cut -hab ip11 -wood neg

In the following example, a stative verb usually inflected in the perfective is inflected in the habitual, to show sarcasm.

(26) tɔɔtaŋga
‘We know/we are knowing (we’re not stupid).’

tu -ɔ -taŋg -a
sp1pl -hab -know -hab

2.3 Perfect: (si-)sp-a-RAD-a. This form is certainly the reflex of the (tentative) Proto-Bantu ‘preterite ipf.’ (-á-...-a) (Meeussen 1967: 109), however, as its values are closer to what Comrie calls the perfect (Comrie 1976: 52-65), I have chosen the label which will have meaning for the largest number of readers.

The interpretation of the perfect is linked to the type of verb: stative vs. dynamic. When used with stative verbs, the time reference is the present, as in:

(27) vitʃiŋgɔ vyaabɔha ‘The beads are beautiful.’

vi -tʃiŋgɔ vi -a -bɔh -a
ip8 -bead sp8 -pft -be.beautiful -pft

(28) aya madzi siyaahɔla tuku ‘This water is not cold.’

aya ma -dʒi si -ya -a -hɔl -a tuku
dem6 ip6 -water p.pfx -sp6 -pft -be.cold -pft neg

When used with dynamic verbs, the perfect refers to a present situation which results from a preceding process, the latter having produced a state which is either still current or the effects of which are still felt.

(29) mwaana aakula
‘The child has grown.’ (One deduces that he used to be short.)

mu -ana a -a -kul -a
ip1 -child sp1 -pft -grow -pft

(30) naadoma kaayii yaavɔ

‘I have been to their house (already, therefore I don’t want to go back).’

nɪ -a -dɔm -a Ø -kaaya -i ɪ -a -vɔ
 splsg -pft -go -pft ip9 -house -loc dp9 -det -poss3pl

(31) sinaadoma kaayii yaavɔ tuku

‘I haven’t been to their house (but would like to go).’

si -nɪ -a -dɔm -a Ø -kaaya -i ɪ -a -vɔ tuku
 p.pfx -splsg -pft -go -pft ip9 -house -loc dp9 -det -poss3pl neg

2.4 Perfective: (si-)sp-a-RAD-irɛ. This conjugation can also be traced back to Proto-Bantu, however it is not clear whether it is the reflex of Meeussen’s ‘recent pf.’ (-a-, -ídé) or his ‘pret. pf.’ (-á-, -ídé) (Meeussen 1967: 113), in neither case do the tones correspond (the pattern in Langi is usually -à-, -ídé, but may vary according to context).

The perfective denotes a completed situation. Contrary to the perfect, it does not refer to a past situation.

(32) mwaana aakurirɛ

‘The child grew.’

mu -ana a -a -kul⁹ -irɛ
 ip1 -child spl -pfv -grow -pfv

(33) kuri sidzaalumirɛ musunḡaati tuku

‘The dogs didn’t bite the rich man.’

Ø -kuri si -dʒi -a -lum -irɛ mu -sunḡaati tuku
 ip10 -dog p.pfx -spl0 -pfv -bite -pfv ip1 -rich.man neg

The perfective can be used with all types of past adverbs, ‘yesterday’ as well as ‘last year’.

(34) idzɔ, naadomirɛ na ludzii

‘Yesterday I went to the watering hole.’

idzɔ nɪ -a -dɔm -irɛ na lu -dʒi -i
 yesterday splsg -pfv -go -pfv conn ip11 -watering.hole -loc

⁹ /l/ is pronounced [r] before /i/.

- (35) mwaaka waalokire, twaadomire na arufa
 ‘Last year, we went to Arusha.’

mu -aka u -a -lok -ire tu -a -dom -ire na arusha
 ip3 -year sp3 -pfv -pass -pfv splpl -pfv-go -pfv conn Arusha

One could be tempted to consider the perfective a ‘past tense’. In my opinion, however, the emphasis is on the completed aspect rather than on the fact that it is past. This is supported by the use of the perfective in conditional phrases.

- (36) kōni naadomire kaayii, rya nderi
 ‘If I go home, I will eat.’ (lit. ‘If I went home, I will eat.’)

kōni ni -a -dom -ire Ø -kaaya -i ry -a nde -ri
 if splsg -pfv -go -pfv ip9 -house -loc eat -sfx splsg -cop

2.5 Anterior perfect: (si-)sp-a sp-a-RAD-a. The anterior perfect has the same aspectual values as the perfect but refers to a situation which takes place prior to another situation, which is necessarily in the past. The structure of this form is unusual, as in Bantu verb forms a TAM marker must be prefixed to a radical, not to another TAM marker. According to my informants, the verb is simply “doubled”.

- (37) fatuma aa aatumama hantu ali uudzire
 ‘Fatuma was working when Ally came.’

Fatuma a -a a -a -tumam -a
 Fatuma sp3sg -pft sp3sg -pft -work -pft
 ha -ntu Ally a -a -udz -ire
 ip16 -place Ally sp3sg -pfv -come -pft

- (38) hantu viinukire, sinaa naanda ira kazi waampere¹⁰ tuku
 ‘When they left, I hadn’t started the work you gave me.’

¹⁰ This form is imbricated. Imbrication affects verbs inflected in the perfective, generally those bearing certain extensions, where, roughly speaking, the extension and the suffix merge. The outcome varies both according to the extension and to the radical final consonant. Other examples can be found in (41), (70), (71). For more information on imbrication, see Bastin (1983) and Dunham (forthcoming).

ha -ntu va -a -i -nuk -irɛ si -nɪ -a nɪ -a -and -a
 ip16-place sp2pl -pfv -refl -leave -pfv p.pfx -sp1sg -pft sp1sg -pft -begin -pft
 ɪ -ra Ø -kazi u -a -N -hɛɛr -irɛ tuku
 dp9 -dem ip9 -work sp2sg -pfv -obj1sg -give -pfv neg

- (39) hayi vaari ava vasinga? sinaa naavɔɔna tuku
 ‘Where were the children? I hadn’t seen them.’

hayi va -a -rɪ ava va -singa
 where sp2 -pft -cop dem2 ip2 -child
 si -nɪ -a nɪ -a -va -ɔn -a tuku
 p.pfx -sp1sg -pft sp1sg -pft -obj2-see -pft neg

A possible explanation is that these structures, as well as those presented in the following section, at one point contained an auxiliary which has since been deleted.

2.6 Anterior perfective: (si-)sp-a sp-a-RAD-irɛ. The anterior perfective has the same aspectual values as the perfective but, as for the anterior perfect in the preceding section, refers to a situation which takes place prior to another, past situation.

- (40) hantu twa twaaturirɛ ma ali akalɔka
 ‘When we appeared, then Ally left (lit. passed).’

ha -ntu tu -a tu -a -tul -irɛ
 ip16 -place sp1pl -pfv sp1pl -pfv -appear -pfv
 ma ali a -ka -lɔk -a
 then Ally sp3sg -nar -pass -nar

- (41) twa twiɪɛɛnɛ, ma nɪkaanda tɪdʒa na idukii
 ‘We had met, then (after which) I started running off to the store.’

tu -a tu -a -i -ʃi -an -irɛ
 sp1pl -pfv sp1pl -pfv -refl -meet -rec -pft
 ma nɪ -ka -and -a -tɪdʒ -a na i -duki -i
 then sp1sg -nar -start -nar -run -sfx conn ip5 -store -loc

2.7 Inevitable: sp-endo-RAD-a. Verbs in this conjugation refer to a situation which the speaker considers will happen in the near future and which is inevitable. The marker *-endo-* is probably a grammaticalized form of the verb *kwenda* ‘want, love’. This is quite frequent in Bantu languages, to the point that Heine (1997: 2) includes it in his catalogue of probabilistic predictions that can be made about African languages: “(v) If a language develops a future tense marker then most likely it will use either of the motion verbs ‘go (to)’ or ‘come (to)’ or a verb of volition ‘want’.”.

As will be seen from the following examples, Langi has retained the notion of volition, but in the sense that when something ‘wants’ to do something, it means that that something is bound to happen. This type of value is found for example in Moore (Raphael Kaboré, pers. com.), a Gur language spoken in Burkina Faso, where when one says ‘it wants to rain’, it means that the clouds are so full that it is bound to rain, or ‘the glass wants to fall’ meaning that if the glass is not moved it will fall from the table.

- (42) mpaka mnenya tundopata habari
‘All the way to Mnenya we are bound to get the news.’

mpaka mnenya tu -endo -pat -a Ø -habari
until Mnenya sp1pl -inv -get -sfx ip10 -news

- (43) ma ha mpitji yendokwatwa
‘Then, here, the hyena is going to get caught.’

ma ha m -pitji i -endo -kwat -w -a
then here ip9 -hyena sp9 -inv -touch -pass -sfx

- (44) kintu mundorya ni waari
‘What you are going to eat is porridge.’ (Whether you like it or not.)

ki -ntu mu -endo¹¹ -ry -a ni u -ari
ip7 -thing sp2pl -inv -eat -sfx pres ip14 -porridge

- (45) akafumya ngɔ dzaatʃwɛ na endokɔwa
‘She took off her clothes (in order) to wash.’

a -ka -fum -y -a ŋ -gɔ dʒi -a -tʃwɛ na

¹¹ Preceded by the vowel /u/, the marker’s initial /ɛ/ drops.

spl -nar -exit -caus -nar ip10 -clothes dp10 -det -poss3sg conn
 a -endɔ -k -ɔw -a
 spl -inv -k -wash -sfx

2.8 Decisional: sp-tɔ-RAD-a. It is highly probable that *-tɔ-* is a grammaticalized form of a full verb (Güldemann 2003: 185), as is the case for *-endɔ-*. Contrary to *-endɔ-* however, it is difficult to say which full verb it stems from. Language-internally, the only likely source is *kutɔla* ‘take’. I have been unable to find any examples of other Bantu languages where ‘take’ has been grammaticalized, however the phenomenon is widely attested in the languages of the world (Hagège 1975, Sebba 1987, Li and Thompson 1974, Lord 1993, Ozanne-Rivierre 2004). Contrary to what is found in Langi, in most of the cases described, the verb ‘take’ is serialized and tends to undergo a gradual reanalysis as a preposition or a case marker. The one example I have found that is somewhat similar to Langi is in the Polynesian Outlier language, Pileni. According to Åshild Næss (2004: 242), two constructions use the verb *toa* ‘take’, with different semantic and syntactic properties: one where *toa* introduces an object argument, and another where it contributes a volitional or inceptive meaning to the clause, similar to the English ‘to take to V-ing’.

One other possibility is that the form derives from a verb ‘to leave’ or ‘to go’ (in Langi *ku-tamanya* and *ku-dɔma* respectively) followed by an infinitive. Botne (1999: 484) mentions two Bantu languages where a marker *-to-* is found. In the first case it is derived from ‘to leave, to go’, in *to-kos-e* ‘va prendre’ (Ntomba C.66: Gilliard 1928), and in the second case (Lozi S.34: Gorman 1950) it is derived from ‘come’ + *ku-inf*: *mu-to-ng-a* ‘come (Pl) and get (it)’. Hadermann (1999: 454-455) mentions one case where a marker *-too-* is found, and also posits its origins in a verb ‘to go’: “En nkengo (C.61), une des formes du futur comporte la marque *-too-* qui pourrait refléter une séquence ancienne *-ta-ko-* où *-ta-* remonterait à un verbe ‘aller’.”

In the examples I have found in Langi, the use of *-tɔ-* signifies that the speaker is about to/has decided to/intends to undertake an action voluntarily.

(46) aakwiire, tutɔsɔŋgɔla mayiti yaatʃwe
 ‘He is dead, we are going to remove his corpse.’

a -a -kwi -ire tu -tɔ -sɔŋgɔl -a Ø -mayiti ɪ -a -tʃwe
 spl -pfv -die -pfv splpl -dec -remove -sfx ip9 -corpse dp9 -det -poss3sg

- (47) ηkukulume itaveka vi, keyi kakatoola
 ‘Just when the rooster was about to crow, he (small bird) took (clothes).’

η -kuku -lume ɪ -tɔ -vek -a vi keyi ka -ka -tɔl -a
 ip9 -chicken -male sp9 -dec -crow -sfx just then sp12 -nar -take -nar

A particularity of the decisional marker is that it can follow other TAM markers in the 3rd position of the verb form, for example, the following:

Habitual + Decisional. When the decisional is combined with the habitual marker, the speaker indicates that a decision has been taken, and that it is in the process of being carried out.

- (48) nootokooa ludzii
 ‘I’m going to wash in the watering hole.’ (Despite contrary orders.)

ni -ɔ -tɔ -k -ɔw -a lu -dʒi -i
 sp1sg -hab -dec -k -wash -hab ip11 -watering.hole -loc

Perfect + Decisional. Here the speaker indicates that a decision was taken, and has already been carried out:

- (49) naatokooa ‘I still went and took a bath.’

ni -a -tɔ -k -ɔw -a
 sp1sg -pft -dec -k -wash -pft

Progressive + Decisional. Here, too, the use of the marker *-tɔ-* seems to add a level of intention or decision to the basic verb, but, as the form is in the negative, to indicate that the decision is not in the process of being carried out.

- (50) mbula yooava, ava vadala siviiyotorima tuku
 ‘It’s raining, the women are not going to farm.’

m -bula ɪ -ɔ -va -a
 ip9 -rain sp9 -hab -beat -hab
 ava va -dala si -va -iyɔ -tɔ -rim -a tuku
 dem2 ip2 -woman p.pfx -sp2 -prog -dec -farm -prog neg

Inevitable + Decisional. When *-endɔ-* and *-tɔ-* are combined, the resulting values are inevitability and intention/decision.

- (51) nɔ utʃiku yɛɛndɔtɔrya ndʒuu ‘It’s at night (that) he goes and eats beans.’
(Even though he knows he’s bound to be caught).

nɔ u -tʃiku ɪ -ɛndɔ -tɔ -ry -a n -dʒuu
rel ip14 -night sp9 -inv -dec -eat -sfx ip10 -bean

- (52) hapana kundɔtɔkɔwa
‘Do not go and wash anyway.’ (Despite our orders).

hapana ku -ɛndɔ -tɔ -k -ɔw -a
neg ip15 -inv -dec -k -wash -sfx

From these examples it can be seen that the inevitable *-ɛndɔ-* and the decisional *-tɔ-*, show rather atypical behavior. This leads me to hypothesize that they entered the Langi tense/aspect/mood system more recently than the other markers we have seen thus far, such as the anterior or the progressive, for example.

The first distinctive feature of *-tɔ-* and *-ɛndɔ-* is that the corresponding full lexical verbs are still in common use (with reservations however concerning the origins of *-tɔ-*, see above).

- (53) tɔɔla idihwa ‘Take some white sorghum.’

tɔɔl -a i -dihwa
take -imp2sg ip5 -sorghum

- (54) simba kintu yɛɛnda ni mahɔŋge ‘The lion, what he loves is steak.’

∅ -simba kɪ -ntu ɪ -a -ɛnd -a ni ma -hɔŋge
ip9 -lion ip7 -thing sp9 -pft -love -pft pres ip6 -steak

I would further hypothesize that *-tɔ-* was grammaticalized before *-ɛndɔ-* as the latter, in its full form, is still attested as the first verb in a verb combination. For example.

- (55) mpitʃi dʒɛɛnda kusakaata ‘Hyenas love to hunt.’

m -pitʃi dʒi -a -ɛnd -a ku -sakaat -a
ip10 -hyena sp10 -pft -love -pft ip15 -hunt -sfx

Furthermore, *tɔ* can combine with other markers in the 3rd column. In my opinion, the value common to these two verbs, *kwɛɛnda* ‘want, love’ and *kutɔɔla* ‘take’ which led to their grammaticalization, and which was lacking in the Langi verb system, is that of showing the speaker’s involvement, or attitude towards the state of affairs expressed in the clause. This type of ‘attitude’ marker is described by Maarten Mous for Ma’ra (2003: 116, 129, 131). A further similarity between the markers mentioned by Mous and the Langi *-tɔ-* is their possibility of combining with other pre-radical TAM markers.

2.9 Narrative: (si)-sp-ka-RAD-a. This conjugation is identical in structure to what I have dubbed the ‘advisory’ (see below, section 2.22). A similar state of affairs was attested by Meeussen (1967), who mentions three distinct conjugations with *-ka-* (motional, inceptive and subsecutive) and notes (p. 109): “The relationship between *-ká-*, *-ka-* and an often attested near homophone formative with meaning ‘and (he did...)’ (subsecutive) is not clear.”

In Langi, the narrative and the advisory are never used in the same speech context: the narrative, as its name indicates, is only used in narration, whereas the advisory, and the injunctive (with the suffix *-ɛ*) is always addressed to someone, even if the advice concerns a third person.

The narrative is never used as the first verb form in a text, the time frame always having been previously established, either by the traditional introduction *ahɔ kale* ‘Once upon a time...’ or by a preceding verb form. Once the time frame is established, successive events are presented in the narrative, most often separated by *ma* ‘then’.

(56) *ma akadɔma* na ludʒi ‘Then she went to the watering hole.’

ma a -ka -dɔm -a na lu -dʒi -i
then sp1 -nar -go -nar conn ip11 -water -loc

(57) *ma ikawuluka* na dʒira ŋɔ ‘Then it flew away with those clothes.’

ma ɪ -ka -wul -uk -a na dʒi -ra ŋ -gɔ
then sp9 -nar -fly -sep -nar conn dp10 -dem ip10 -clothes

Verbs inflected in the narrative are usually translated by a preterit in English, but in Langi it cannot be considered a ‘past tense’, as by itself it carries no reference to time, and is dependant on a separate form. In this respect, the narrative is com-

parable to the ‘aorist’ described by Guentchéva (1990: 107) for Bulgarian, and Robert (1996) for Wolof. Robert states:

L’Aoriste est une forme verbale qui n’indique pas de repérage temporel. (...) Les événements à l’Aoriste n’ont pas par eux-mêmes ni lieu ni temps ; ils s’inscrivent dans un cadre situationnel prédéfini à l’aide d’une autre conjugaison.
[p. 377]

2.10 Narrative present: sp-ri (ku-)RAD-a. In this construction, the verb radical following the copula may or may not carry the infinitive prefix *ku-*, depending on how closely, semantically, the subject is bound to the lexical verb. In example (58), the lion is coming of his own free will — he could choose not to — thus the verb carries the infinitive prefix. In example (59), the hare is struggling to get by and can do nothing about it, thus the prefix is absent. See also examples (15)-(18).

This conjugation is only attested in narratives. It is used when there is a break in the narration, either in time or in space.

(58) *haha simba ɪɪ kuudʒa nɔ ʃiana mpitʃi*
‘Now the lion is coming to meet the hyena.’

haha ∅ -simba ɪ -ɪ ku -udʒ -a nɔ ʃian -a m -pitʃi
now ip9 -lion sp9-cop ip15 -come -sfx rel meet -sfx ip9 -hyena

This example is taken from a story.¹² The preceding sentences present the lion and the hyena, and the narrative present is then used to signify that the speaker has finished the introduction and is entering the narrative present.

(59) *ntʃʊŋgula ɪɪ kwɛta* ‘The hare is struggling (to get by).’

n -tʃʊŋgula ɪ -ɪ kwɛt -a
ip9 -hare sp9-cop struggle -sfx

Here too, the hare has been introduced as part of the story in the preceding sentences, example (59) serving to describe the state the hare is in, in the narrative present.

¹²This story and others may be read and listened to on the LACITO Archive Project website: <http://lacito.vjf.cnrs.fr/archivage>.

2.11 Narrative past progressive: ku-RAD-a sp-a-rɪ. Unfortunately I have only one example of this construction in my data, and it is elicited,¹³ but it is also mentioned in Nurse (2003: 97). There is further mention of this same construction, in this order (infinitive + copula) as well as in the inverse order (copula + infinitive) in Mous (2000: 475, however his examples were given by Nurse).¹⁴ According to Mous, the change in word order is probably due to emphasis (pers. com).

- (60) kuseka twaari ma uhu maka akaanda rɪra
‘We were laughing then this guy started to cry!’

ku	-sɛk	-a	tu	-a	-rɪ	ma	uhu	∅	-maka
ip15	-laugh	-sfx	sp1pl	-pft	-cop	then	dem1	ip1a	-guy
	a	-ka	-and	-a	rɪr	-a			
	sp1	-nar	-start	-nar	cry	-sfx			

Despite the scarcity of data, I have given this example as it shows a counter-universal word order (infinitive + copula) — see the general introduction to section 2).

2.12 Dynamic past progressive: sp-a-rɪ sp-iyɔ-RAD-a. This structure is also only attested in elicitation, in one example. However, it confirms that the copula *-rɪ* is largely productive in verbal constructions, both with and without the perfect marker, and both preceding and following the lexical verb.

- (61) twaari twiiyɔseka ‘We were (in the process of) laughing.’

tu	-a	-rɪ	tu	-iyɔ	-sɛk	-a
sp1pl	-pft	-cop	sp1pl	-prog	-laugh	-prog

2.13 Dynamic past habitual: sp-a-rɪ sp-ɔ-RAD-a.

- (62) twaari tɔseka ‘We were laughing.’

tu	-a	-rɪ	tu	-ɔ	-sɛk	-a
sp1pl	-pft	-cop	sp1pl	-hab	-laugh	-hab

¹³It must be noted that this is a common problem when one works on a language that has not been previously described.

¹⁴There seems to be some confusion in the translation in Mous (‘We are buying’), which should read as it appears in Nurse (2003) ‘We were laughing’.

From examples (60)-(62), it seems that the copula inflected in the perfect situates a process in the past. We will see in the following sections that when the lexical verb is stative, as opposed to dynamic, the copula *-idza* is used.

2.14 Stative past habitual: (si-)sp-idza sp-ɔ-RAD-a. This construction is made up of a verb inflected in the habitual preceded by the copula *-idza*, which serves to place the situation in the past. The aspectual values of the main verb are kept.

- (63) twiidza tɔkɪmba hantu tɔyɛnda, haha tɔtɪdʒa
‘We used to sing while walking, now we run.’

tu -idza tu ɔ -k -imb -a ha -ntu tu ɔ -yɛnd -a
sp1pl -cop sp1pl -hab -k -sing -hab ip16 -place sp1pl -hab -walk -hab
haha tu ɔ -tɪdʒ -a
now sp1pl -hab -run -hab

- (64) twiidza tɔkɪkala Kondoā ma tukasaama na London
‘We used to live in Kondoā, then we migrated to London.’

tu -idza tu ɔ -k -ikal -a Kondoā
sp1pl -cop sp1pl -hab -k -reside -hab Kondoā
ma tu -ka -saam -a na London
then sp1pl -nar -migrate -nar conn London

- (65) hantu nɔkɪkaala amerɪkani¹⁵ siniidza nɔɔtumama bɛnkii tuku
‘When I lived in America I didn’t use to work in a bank.’

ha -ntu nɪ ɔ -k -ikaal -a amerɪka -nɪ
ip16 -place sp1sg -hab -k -reside -hab Amerɪka -loc
sɪ -nɪ -idza nɪ ɔ -tumam -a Ø -bɛnkɪ -i tuku
p.pfx -sp1sg -cop sp1sg -hab -work -hab ip9 -bank -loc neg

2.15 Stative past perfect: sp-idza sp-a-RAD-a. In this construction the copula is combined with verbs inflected in the perfect aspect. The latter keeps its aspectual values, but is placed in the past.

¹⁵ This locative suffix is borrowed from Swahili.

(66) niidza nɛɛnda tɪdʒa na tʃuuri ‘I used to like to run in the morning.’

nɪ -idʒa nɪ -a -ɛnd -a tɪdʒ -a na kɪ -uri
sp1sg -cop sp1sg -pft -love -pft run -sfx conn ip7 -morning

(67) mwaasu wiidza waavanka ‘When the sun was shining.’
(in response to: ‘When did you usually eat?’)

mʉ -asu ʉ -idʒa ʉ -a -var -ik -a
ip3 -sun sp3 -cop sp3 -pft -shine -neut -pft

(68) ira siku iidza yaaboha ‘That day was beautiful.’

ira Ø -siku ɪ -idʒa ɪ -a -bɔh -a
dem9 ip9 -day sp9 -cop sp9 -pft -be.beautiful -pft

2.16 Stative far past perfect: sp-a-idʒa sp-a-RAD-a. This is one of the rare cases where one finds distinctions between degrees of pasts in Langi. The only other case is shown below (section 2.17 vs. 2.18). Unfortunately I have only one example of this conjugation, and no examples where this conjugation is in the negative.

(69) wɔkati naadʒa mududi, naadʒa naadudya sana
‘When I was small, I was very small.’

ʉ -ɔkati nɪ -a -idʒa mʉ -dudi
ip14 -moment sp1sg -pft -cop dp1 -small
nɪ -a -dʒa nɪ -a -dudi -a sana
sp1sg -pft -cop sp1sg -pft -be.small -pft very

2.17 Stative past perfective: sp-idʒa (si)-sp-a-RAD-ire. Verbs in the stative past perfective refer to situations which were current in the past.

(70) wiidza waatɛtɛ¹⁶ waami ‘You used to have a corral.’

ʉ -idʒa ʉ -a -tɛt -ire ʉ -ami
sp2sg -cop sp2sg -pft -have -pft ip14 -corral

¹⁶ This verb is defective, appearing only in the perfective, where it shows an irregular form of imbrication. A comparable verb for ‘have’ is found in Chaga (M.-L. Montlahuc, pers. com.), where it is also defective (although to a lesser extent than in Langi).

- (71) niidza siniifyeene na mama wiitu tuku
 ‘I used to not look like our¹⁷ mother.’

ni -idza si -ni -a -i -fy -an -ire
 splsg -cop p.pfx -splsg -pfv -refl -ressemble -asc -pfv
 na ∅ -mama u -a -itu tuku
 conn ip1a -mother dp1 -det -poss1pl neg

We shall see in example (74) below that in the stative far past perfective, it is the copular verb which carries the negative pre-prefix.

2.18 Stative far past perfective: (si-)sp-a-idza sp-a-RAD-ire.

- (72) vaadza vaatete udzusi wooruta¹⁸
 ‘They used to be blacksmiths.’ (lit. ‘They used to have the profession of pulling.’)

va -a -idza va -a -tet -ire u -dzusi u -o -rut -a
 sp2 -pft -cop sp2 -pfv-have -pfv ip14 -profession pp14 -rel -pull -rel

- (73) uhu musinga hantu aadza mududi, aadza iifyeene na iyɔ waavɔ
 ‘When this child was small he looked like their mother.’

uhu mu -singa ha -ntu a -a -idza mu -dudi, a -a -idza
 dem1 ip1 -child ip16-place sp1-pft -cop dp1 -small sp1 -pft -cop
 a -a -i -fy -an -ire na ∅ -iyɔ u -a -vɔ
 sp1 -pfv -refl -resemble -asc -pfv conn IP1a -mother dp3 -det -poss3pl

- (74) ava vasinga hantu vaadza vadudi sivaadza viifyeene na iyɔ waavɔ tuku
 ‘When these children were small they didn’t used to look like their mother.’

ava va -singa ha -ntu va -a -idza va -dudi si -va -a -idza
 dem2 ip2-child ip16 -place sp2 -pft -cop dp2 -small p.pfx -sp1 -pft -cop
 va -a -i -fy -an -ire na ∅ -iyɔ u -a -vɔ tuku
 sp2-pfv -refl-ressemble -asc -pfv conn IP1a -mother dp1 -det -poss3pl neg

¹⁷ Family members (and homes) are never possessed in the singular in Langi.

¹⁸ Relative forms apparently share the same TAM markers as the habitual, only the prefix differs (the pronominal prefix is used as opposed to the subject prefix).

As can be seen from the examples in the preceding five sections, in accordance with its use independently, verb constructions with the past copula always refer to durative as opposed to punctual situations.

2.19 Future: (ku-)RAD-a sp-ri. This form denotes either an immediate or an indeterminate future, depending on the presence of the class 15 prefix *ku-*. I have grouped the two forms together for practical reasons: in several cases, such as in the negative or the interrogative, only one form is possible, so presenting the two forms together eliminates the need to go back and forth between sections.

The prefixless form denotes an immediate future, something that is about to happen.

(75) *ɲɛya ari* ‘He is about to sleep.’

ɲɛy -a a -ri
sleep -sfx sp1 -cop

(76) *muti wiya uri* ‘The tree is about to fall.’

mu -ti wiy -a u -ri
ip3 -tree fall -sfx sp3 -cop

The prefixed form is used to denote an indeterminate future.

(77) *muti kuwiya uri* ‘The tree will fall (some day).’

mu -ti ku -wiy -a u -ri
ip3 -tree ip15 -fall -sfx sp3 -cop

The prefixed form is also used whenever a time or place is mentioned.

(78) *kukera turi muti lamutondo* ‘We will cut the tree tomorrow.’

ku -ker -a tu -ri mu -ti lamutondo
ip15 -cut -sfx sp1pl -cop ip3 -tree tomorrow

(79) *kudoma ari na dodoma* ‘He will go to Dodoma.’

ku -dom -a a -ri na dodoma
ip15 -go -sfx sp1 -cop conn Dodoma

- (80) mwaarimu kuvasomera arɪ vasiŋga kɪtabu ʃulii
 ‘The teacher will read a book to the children at school.’

mu-arɪmu ku -va -sɔm -ɛr -a a -rɪ va -siŋga
 ip1 -teacher ip15-obj2 -read -appl -sfx sp1 -cop ip2-child
 kɪ -tabu Ø -ʃule -i
 ip7 -book ip9 -school -loc

In conditional phrases, the prefixless form is used in the apodosis, probably to indicate that the action/event/state will immediately follow the fulfillment of the condition.

- (81) kɔni naadɔmirɛ kaayii, rya ndɛrɪ ‘If I go home, I will eat.’

kɔni ni -a -dɔm -irɛ Ø -kaaya -i ry -a ndɛ -rɪ
 ifsp1 sg -pfv -go -pfv ip9 -house -loc eat -sfx sp1sg -cop

- (82) kɔni wɪmbirɛ, ni vina ndɛrɪ ‘If you sing, me, I will dance.’

kɔni u -a -ɪmb -irɛ ni vin -a ndɛ -rɪ
 if sp2sg -pfv -sing -pfv pers1sg dance -sfx sp1sg -cop

However the prefixed form is used when there is an object marker in the verb form, certainly in part because of possible confusion between the object prefix and the infinitive prefix (in the following example, both *ku-*).

- (83) kɔni wɪmbirɛ kukuvinra ndɛrɪ ‘If you sing, I will dance for you.’

kɔni u -a -ɪmb -irɛ ku -ku -vin -ɪr -a ndɛ -rɪ
 if sp2sg -pfv -sing -pfv ip15 -obj2sg -dance -appl -sfx sp1sg -cop

To the best of my knowledge, this constituent order (verb + copula) is limited to a very small number of Bantu languages. Among these languages, I believe a distinction must be made between those which accept SOV order and those with strict SVO order. In the first category are found languages from Guthrie’s zones B.40-50 and H.10-H.30. These have been studied by Hadermann (1996) who states:

La deuxième construction que nous avons analysée est celle où l'infinitif est antéposé à un verbe auxiliaire. Dans cette structure l'infinitif est généralement introduit par le préfixe locatif *mu-* et l'ensemble traduit l'aspect progressif du procès verbal en question. Donc, contrairement à ce qui se passe dans les constructions à verbe redoublé, le morphème locatif (ou sa trace) propre au temps du progressif (cf. la reconstruction *PV-di-mu-NV) n'apparaît pas dans la forme verbale conjuguée mais dans la forme *nomino-verbale* antéposée. Cette caractéristique est un signe du fait que la structure 'infinitif + auxiliaire' est issue de la séquence 'auxiliaire + infinitif' mais à un moment où celle-ci pouvait encore s'interpréter en 'verbe + complément_[nomino-verbal]'. Puis, il y a eu antéposition du complément, ceci probablement pour des raisons d'emphase. De nouveau, l'existence de l'ordre SOV dans les langues en question a sans doute facilité l'antéposition du locatif infinitival. Au moment où la structure emphatique '(S) Loc-Inf Aux' devient une structure non marquée, un processus de grammaticalisation peut se déclencher et le locatif infinitival sera réinterprété en noyau verbal, suivi d'un verbe-auxiliaire 'être'. [p. 167]

The second category are languages with strict SVO order which nevertheless show constructions where the infinitival form precedes the auxiliary. In this category are found for example the closely related Gusii (E.42) and Kuria (E.43). In Gusii, the forms with an auxiliary (the copula *-re*) following a main verb correspond to what I call a narrative present (Whiteley 1960: 57) (tones not marked).

- (84) nkogenda¹⁹ nde boono korigia embori
'Now I'm going looking for the goat.'

When the auxiliary carries the verbal prefix *-a-*, the form corresponds to what I call a narrative past progressive.

- (85) nkorema naare boono ngotimoka nde
'I've been hoeing and now I'm resting'

In Kuria, the forms with an auxiliary following the main verb correspond to something between what I call present progressive and habitual (Whiteley 1955: 92).

¹⁹ The class 15 prefix is *ko-*, these forms almost certainly bear the cliticized focus marker *n(i)*- (Nurse and Muzale 1999).

(86) ṅgokɔra are emeremo kira urusiku 'He's working every day.'

(87) ṅkorema nde bono ṅkumunya nde 'I'm hoeing and am resting.'

In Mbugwe (F.34) the situation is slightly different. All the tenses that make use of an auxiliary in combination with an infinitive show the order verb-auxiliary, in other words, the order never varies, contrary to what is found in Gusii, Kuria and Langi. In Mbugwe, three different auxiliaries may follow the main verb: the present progressive *-kende*, the future *-je* (which is the verb *ja* 'come' conjugated in the optative, marked by the suffix *-e*) and the habitual *-anda* (Mous 2000: 471).

(88) 'The rain falls with force.'

mbula o -tova e -kende na ngulu
9:rain 15 -rain 9 -pres.prog with 9:force

(89) 'We will eat cassava.'

ora ko -je mohogo
15:eat 1pl -come:subj 3:cassava

(90) 'Do you eat fish?'

ora w -anda nsiye?
15:eat 2sg -hab 9:fish

One feature shared by Gusii, Kuria, Mbugwe and Langi is that they have long been surrounded by communities speaking non-Bantu languages, where the object precedes the verb (Nurse 2000b: 525-6), which seems to indicate that this phenomenon is areal (Dahl 2001: 1456 who states 'Areal linguistics is traditionally concerned with similarities between geographically contiguous languages, in particular when they cannot be ascribed to a common proto-language.'). Furthermore, the adoption of these structures may well have been facilitated by internal factors. In Langi, the order *infinitive + copula* is only attested in main clause affirmatives, and in all other cases the order *copula + infinitive* is found.

(91) nadi urɪ dɔma 'When will you go?'

nadi u -rɪ dɔm -a
when sp2sg -cop go -sfx

(92) *ŋɔmbɛ siiri ŋwa madʒi yɔɔsi tuku* ‘The cow will not drink all the water.’

∅- *ŋɔmbɛ si -ɪ -rɪ ŋw -a ma -dʒi ya- ɔsi tuku*
ip9- cow p.pfx -sp9 -cop drink -sfx ip6 -water dp6- all neg

(93) *nɪ mwaarɪmu nɔ ari sɔma kɪtabu*
‘It is the teacher who will read a book.’

nɪ mu -arɪmu nɔ a -rɪ sɔm -a kɪ -tabu
pres ip1 -teacher rel sp1 -cop read -sfx ip7 -book

(94) *kuudʒa ari kɔni ari rɛɛta tʃaakurya*
‘He can come if he brings food.’ (lit. ‘He will come if he is bringing food.’)

ku -udʒ -a a -rɪ kɔni a -rɪ rɛɛt -a kɪ -a -ku -ry -a
ip15-come -sfx sp1 -cop if sp1-cop bring -sfx ip7 -det -ip15 -eat -sfx

(95) *hantu urɪ turɪra, kunɪʃana urɪ naalɔkɪrɛ*
‘When you appear, you will find me gone.’ (lit. ‘When you will appear...’)

ha -ntu u -rɪ tul -ɪr -a
ip16 -place sp2sg -cop appear -appl -sfx
ku -nɪ -ʃan -a u -rɪ nɪ -a -lɔk -ɪrɛ
ip15 -obj1sg -find -sfx sp2sg -cop sp1sg -pfv -leave -pfv

We also saw that constituent order in Langi can change in other circumstances, namely for reasons of emphasis, such as in example (60).

2.20 Imperatives: RAD-sfx. Imperatives are characterized by the absence of both subject prefixes and pre-radical TAM markers. There are three affirmative imperative forms in Langi, distinguished by their suffixes.

(96) 2sg *dɔma* ‘go!’ *ɪmba* ‘sing!’
dɔm -a *ɪmb -a*
go -imp2sg *sing -imp2sg*

(97) 1pl *pale* ‘let’s count!’ *sarɛ* ‘let’s taste!’
pal -ɛ *sa -ɪr -ɛ*
count -imp1pl *taste -appl -imp1pl*

- (98) 2pl rɛki mburi ‘leave the goat!’ iti ‘pour!’
 rɛk -i m -buri it -i
 leave -imp2pl ip9 -goat pour -imp2pl

There are three negative imperative forms, apparently interchangeable: *apa ku-RAD-a*, *hapana ku-RAD-a* or *ku-RAD-a tuku*. These forms are impersonal, equivalent to the English ‘no V-ing’ or ‘do not V’. They are composed of a verb in the infinitive preceded by either *apa* or *hapana* (the latter form is borrowed from Swahili and appears to be replacing the former). The third possible negative form is composed of a verb in the infinitive accompanied by the adverb *tuku* placed at the end of the sentence.

- (99) *apa kutɪɪdʒa* ‘No running.’

apa *ku* -ɪɪdʒ -a
 neg ip15 -run -sfx

- (100) *hapana kuyɛnda ndʒɪrii* ‘No walking on the path.’

hapana *ku* -yɛnd -a n -dʒɪra -i
 neg ip15 -walk -sfx ip9 -path -loc

- (101) *taata antɛhɛɛɛɛ kurɪma kɪdundii tuku*
 ‘Papa told me: do not farm in the hills.’

∅ -taata a -a -N -tɛh -ɛɪ -ɪɛɛ ku -rɪm -a kɪ -dunda-i tuku
 ip1a -father sp1 -pfv -obj1sg -listen-appl -pfv ip15-farm -sfx ip7 -hill -loc neg

2.21 Subjunctive: sp-RAD-ɛ. The subjunctive mood is marked by a ∅ TAM marker in the 3rd position, combined with the suffix -ɛ. Contrary to the imperative, the verb bears a subject marker in the 2nd position. This mood is used to express wishes, orders, obligations, etc. Whereas the imperative is necessarily addressed to someone, this is not the case for the subjunctive.

- (102) *uɔɔlwɛ* ‘that you marry/ you should marry/
 I want you to get married’

u -ɔɔl -w -ɛ
 sp2sg -marry -pass -sub

(103) adʒɛŋgɛ numba ‘that he build a house’

a -dʒɛŋg -ɛ ɲ -umba
 sp1 -build -sub ip9 -house

(104) tiilare kirumɛ ‘that we show each other our magic’

tu -i -la -ɪr -ɛ kɪ -rumɛ
 sp1pl -refl -show -appl -sub ip7 -magic

(105) mumpɛɛɛ madʒi ‘that you give me water’

mu -ŋ -hɛɛɪ -ɛ ma -dʒi
 sp2pl -obj1sg -give -sub ip6 -water

The subjunctive mood does not have its own negative form, and instead shares that of the imperative. Furthermore, many negative subjunctive forms are rendered by verbs with negative meaning, such as *kudira* ‘to not go’.

(106) adiriwɛ ‘that she be made to not go’

a -dir -i -w -ɛ
 sp1 -not.go -caus -pass -subj

2.22 Advisory: sp-ka-RAD-a. This form bears what is commonly called a distal marker, *-ka-*, in the 3rd position. This marker is thought to derive from a verb meaning ‘go’ (see Botne 1999 for a comprehensive study of the marker *-ka-*). In Langi, the distal imparts the notion of movement, even though the direction is not always itive. These forms are used to denote advice or weak orders.

(107) tukareɛta mpɛmbɛ ma dʒɪkavikɪrwa ira myɔɔda
 ‘We must bring horns, and the horns must be filled with potion.’

tu -ka -rɛɛt -a m -hɛmbɛ ma dʒɪ -ka -vik -ɪr -w -a
 sp1pl -adv -bring -adv ip10 -horn then sp10 -adv -put -appl -pass -adv
 ɪ -ra mɪ -ɔɔda
 dp4 -dem ip4 -potion

- (108) ukatahira madʒi vi, ukuudʒa na kaayii
 ‘Just go and fetch water, and come back home.’

u -ka -tah -ir -a ma -dʒi vi u -ka -udʒ -a
 sp2sg -adv-fetch -appl-adv ip6 -water only sp2sg -adv -come-adv
 na ∅ -kaaya -i
 conn ip9 -house -loc

- (109) vakasakwa vaosi ‘Elders must be found.’

va -ka -sak -w -a va -osi
 sp2 -adv -find -pass -adv ip2 -elder

2.23 Injunctive: sp-ka-RAD-ε. Combining the distal marker with the suffix -ε, these forms denote forceful orders. -ka- is the only pre-radical TAM marker attested in combination with the subjunctive suffix -ε.

- (110) uka uka ukalɔɔlwe ni mambeya vaa waari
 ‘Come, come, you must be married to Mambeya vaa Waari.’

uk -a uk -a u -ka -lɔɔl -w -ε
 come -imp2sg come -imp2sg sp2sg -inj -marry -pass -inj
 ni mambeya va -a u -ari
 pres Mambeya dp2 -det ip14 -porridge

- (111) tukaŋeye ‘We must go sleep.’

tu -ka -ŋey -ε
 sp1pl -inj -sleep -inj

3. Conclusion.

The Langi verbal system is similar to most Bantu, and indeed Niger-Congo languages in that it expresses tense, aspect and mood through both ‘simple’ verb forms and syntactic verbal constructions. However, it seems to have adopted certain areal features, which probably originated through contact with the neighboring Cushitic languages, Alagwa and Burunge. Langi also seems to have adopted a new system of distinctions within the verbal paradigm, favoring aspectual oppositions over temporal ones, as evidenced by the fact that temporal distinctions are expressed through verbal constructions, whereas aspectual and modal distinctions

are expressed directly by morphological verb form. Langi thus contributes to the study of how language contact, or perhaps more importantly, language enclavement, can lead to the adoption of grammatical elements, and even to a change in word order.

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