

Interaction between tense-mood-aspect and Negation in Makaa (A83)

IBIRAHIM NJOYA

University of Hamburg / Asien-Afrika-Institut.

Abteilung für Afrikanistik und Äthiopistik

Hamburg, Germany

Ibrahim_1980@yahoo.fr

ABSTRACT

A keen look at the literature available on Makaa (A83) reveals that a sizeable amount of scientific works worthier to be mentioned has been carried out on the target language. These studies, generally, deal with various aspects of Makaa phonology, noun and verbal morphology, history of the people, some cultural aspects, and syntax. To put it clearly, the main goal of this paper is not to come out with a synopsis of these studies, rather, it will focus on the co-relation between tense-aspect-mood (Henceforth TAM) on the one hand and negation on the other. This analysis will be guided by the following questions any study based on negation have to address.

- How is negation marked in Makaa?
- Which element(s) of the sentence is/are effected or involved?
- What is/are the negator(s) distribution in the internal structure of the inflection?
- How does negation interact with TAM?
- Which meanings do negative constructions express?

Before presenting some results in connection with the questions above, let us revisit what has been previously said on TAM and negation in Makaa. Heath (1989, 1991), Heath (2003: 344), Nurse, Rose and Hewson (2010) and Hewson (2010) following an intuition by the aforementioned works of Heath and Heath distinguish five absolute tenses in Makaa, namely, distant past, recent past, present tense, near future and distant future; four aspects, Progressive, Habitual, Anterior and Perfective of which the latter is unmarked; and three moods, Indicative, Subjunctive and Imperative, the indicative being the unmarked or default form.

According to Heath (2003:345) *'Negation in the indicative is marked by both a pre-stem clitic and a suffix in the position of Final Vowel. The clitic (toneless a + H + suffix è or é) varies somewhat from tense to tense.* Hewson (2010:8) will add that the Final Vowel attaches to *fí* in past tense, and with tonal adjusment. In the subjunctive and Imperative (1b), negation is

expressed by *kú* + L, and the L causes any following H to downstep. See examples below from Heath (2003)

1.a.	<i>mà: tʃálé málándú</i>		b.	<i>kú ˀwíŋg ómpjâ</i>
	<i>mà à-tʃàl-é</i> <i>mà-lándú</i>			<i>kú</i> <i>wíŋg</i> <i>ò-mpjâ</i>
	I NEG-cut-NEG MacH cl2-dog			NEG chase MacH cl2-dog
	‘I do not cut down palm trees [sic]’			‘Do not chase the dogs!’

However, even though the summary given above seems to show clearly that Makaa TAM and negation have received a very close attention, it will be shown in this paper that negation and the TAM system in Makaa is not as simple as it is described presently in the literature.

(a) Instead of five tenses, Makaa counts seven absolute tenses: three future tenses symmetrical to three past tenses in addition to a present tense. The additional tenses are immediate past and remote future (Ibrahim 2007, 2013).

P3	<i>á</i>	Remote past	earlier than yesterday and above
P2	<i>ámà</i>	Recent past	earlier today; yesterday; two days ago
P1	<i>má</i>	Immediate past	a while ago
P0	\emptyset	General present	now or a in a while
	<i>H-là</i> (Inf)	Gnomic present	undetermined
F1	<i>é</i>	Immediate future	later today; can stretch till tomorrow and above
F2	<i>bá</i>	Recent future	tomorrow and above
F3	<i>ébá</i>	Remote future	several days, weeks, months or years

(b) Though not mentioned in the literature, Makaa also counts relative tenses. In narrative discourse, the morphemes *kà/ki* (used interchangeably) or *mú*, often translated as ‘then’ for both), are used to support verbs in enumeration of consecutive events.

(c) Instead of four aspects, it will be shown that Makaa uses Inflectional morphemes at Pre-Stem, Post-stem position, reduplication, repetition and compounding to mark 11 distinct

aspects: factitive, progressive, habitual, iterative, inceptive, completive, Prioritive, proximate, counter-expectation, persistive and continuative.

(d) As for negation, it will be shown that negation in Makaa is much more complex due to the fact that it varies depending on the tense, the aspect, the mood; on whether the construction is focused or not. The various constructions just named are subjected to important tonal fluctuation. Below are few illustrations

- 2.a. *Mõ Sal* *Mà dǐ Sal*
Mà-ó Sal *Mà dǐ Sal*
 1Sg-FOC Sal 1Sg FOC+NEG Sal
 ‘I am Sal’ ‘I am not Sal’
- b. *Mà ǫ́sàw* *Mà: ǫ́sàwèjè*
Mà ǫ́sàw *Mà-à ǫ́sàw-è-j-è*
 1Sg bear 1Sg-NEG bear-NEG-Ce-NEG
 ‘I bear it’ ‘I cannot bear it’
- 3.a. *Òmpú: ó bá ná ηgà jwô.*
ò-mpú: ó bá ná ηgà jwô
 C2-rain SM F₂ PER PROG rain
 ‘Rains will be still falling’
- b. *Òmpú: bwá: bélé ná ηgà jwô.*
Ò-mpú: bwâ-à bá-l-é ná ηgà jwô.
 C2-rain SM-NEG F₂-Ce-NEG PER PROG rain
 ‘Rains will not be still falling’
- 4.a. *Měbá kà:dǐ jà ìdâw*
Mà ébá kà:d-í jà ì-dâw
 I F₃ dish-Ve him Cl₈-food
 ‘I will dish him food’
- b. *Mà: bálè bá kà:dǐ jà ìdâw*
Mà-à bá-l-è bá kà:d-í jà ì-dâw
 1Sg-NEG F₂-Ce-NEG F₂ dish-Ve him Cl₈-food
 ‘I will not dish him food’

This study, we hope, will enrich Makaa with a detail study on negation and clarify the interaction between TAM and negation in Makaa verbal constructions.

REFERENCES

- Heath, Daniel. 1989. *Tense and aspect in Makaa*. Cameroon, Yaounde: SIL.
- Heath, Daniel. 1991. "Tense and aspect in Makaa". In Stephen C. Anderson and Bernard Comrie (eds.), *Tense and aspect in eight languages of Cameroon*. SIL and the University of Texas at Arlington. Publication in Linguistics, 99: Dallas. 3-15.
- Heath, Teresa. 2003. "Makaa (A83)". In Derek N. and Gerard, P. (eds). *The Bantu Languages*. Routledge (Taylor and Francis Group): London and New-York. 335-348.
- Hewson, Johnson. 2010. Makaa. In Verbal Categories in Niger-Congo Languages. Nurse, Derek, Sarah Rose and Johnson Hewson. (eds.) 2010. Verbal Categories in Niger-Congo Languages. Chapter 17 http://www.mun.ca/linguistics/nico/Niger-Congo_Book_Introduction.pdf
- Ibrahim, Njoya. 2013. *Tense-Aspect-Mood in Makaa (A83)*. Paper presented at the 5th Conference on Bantu Languages in Paris June 12-15, 2013.
- Ibrahim, Njoya. 2007. *Identificational vs. Information Focus in Makaa: Interaction between Syntax and Semantics*. *Maîtrise dissertation*. University of Yaounde 1. Cameroon.
-To appear. *Reduplication in Makaa (A83)*. Afrika und Übersee. Verlag Von Dietrich Reimer: Berlin
- Nurse, Derek, Sarah Rose and Johnson Hewson. (eds.) 2010. Verbal Categories in Niger-Congo Languages. http://www.mun.ca/linguistics/nico/Niger-Congo_Book_Introduction.pdf