



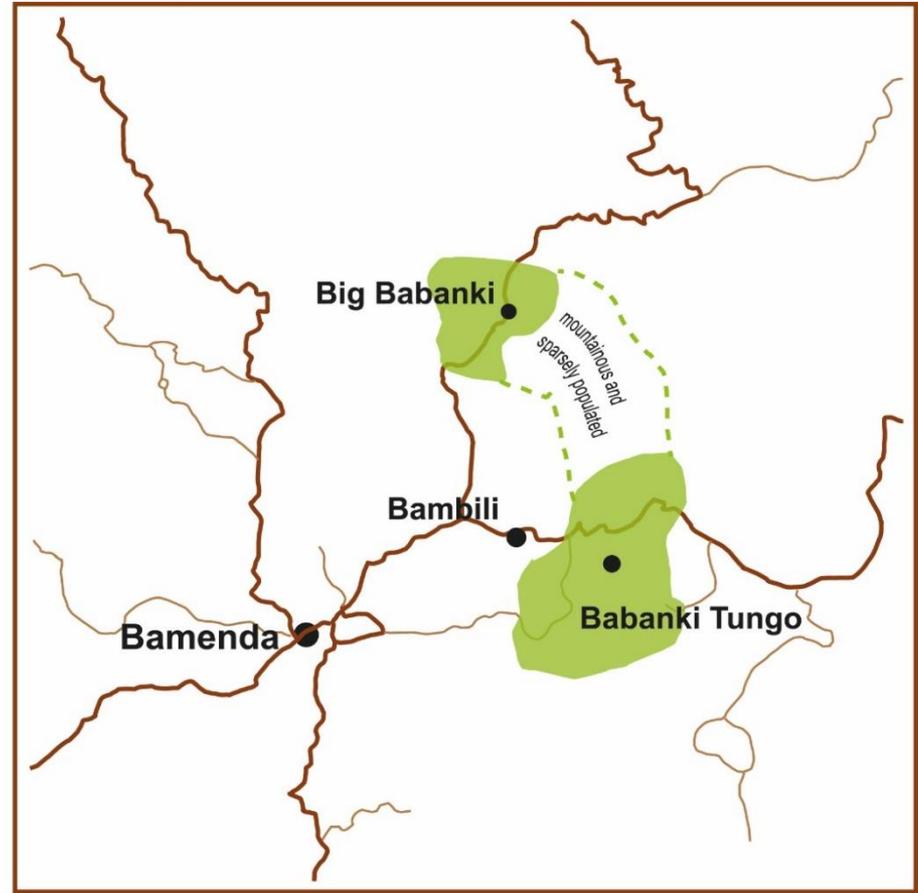
# GRAMMATICALIZATION OF BABANKI QUOTATIVE MARKERS

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Central Ring Grassfields Bantu language of North-West Cameroon

39,000 speakers (Eberhard, Simons & Fennig (2022))

Spontaneous narratives and elicitations from Babanki Tungo:







## Babanki quotative markers (clause linkers)

	<i>la</i>	<i>ta</i>
Complementizer	✓	
Reported speech	✓	
Interrogative	✓	
Catchphrase	✓	
Numerals	✓	
Ideophones	✓	✓
Adverbs		✓



## Babanki quotative markers (clause linkers)

(1) *wayn yi gaʔ lá wu ʒí*

1.child P1 say QUOT 2SG eat

‘The child said that you should eat.’

(2) *wayn yi di tá nt̄ɛʔ*

1.child P1 cry QUOT ADV

‘The child cried only a little’



## Two main goals of the paper

- ❑ Morpho-syntax and semantics
- ❑ Possible grammaticalization paths



## Complementizer lá

Various subordinate clauses introduced by lá:

(3)a. *tòh'kyi kú'só k̄-tám lá ŋgò tsonó tsú*  
 1.tortoise set 7-trap COMP 1.antelope dwell there

'Tortoise set a trap to distract antelope.'

b. *yà k'á' lá vwón vyí zít k̄-bayn*  
 3SG want COMP 2.child DEM eat 7-fufu

'He wants that the children should eat fufu.'



lá is used optionally to introduce imperatives clauses

(4)a. (*lá*      *wu*)      *ʒí*  
QUOT      2SG      eat  
'You (SG) eat!'

b. (*lá*)      *yàŋ*      *ʒí*  
QUOT      2PL      eat  
'You (PL) eat!'



## Reported speech lá

Reported speech introduced by lá:

(5) a. *wayn yi gar<sup>2</sup> lá ʒí*  
 1.child P1 say QUOT eat  
 ‘The child said eat.’

b. *wayn yi gar<sup>2</sup> lá wu ʒí*  
 1.child P1 say QUOT 2SG eat  
 ‘The child said that you should eat.’

(6) *wayn yi bɛ̃m lá yi ví muḃ*  
 1.child P1 say QUOT 3LOG come Q  
 ‘The child asked whether he should come.’



lá introduces the interrogative clauses as in (7), and the catchphrase (8)

(7)a. (wú gáʔ) lá (yɔ̀ɔ̀)  
 2SG say QUOT what  
 ‘What did you say?’

b. (wú gáʔ) lá (wayn ɲwítʔmá íé)  
 2SG say QUOT 1.child sit where  
 ‘Where did you say the child should sit?’

(8) (má gáʔ) (lá) mbɔ̀  
 1SG say QUOT attention  
 ‘I said....’



lá is used optionally with numerals:

(9) *tòh'kyi w' wə-ləmə wə-wén (lá) wə-ka? á dʒī*

1.tortoise keep 2-sibling 2-3SG QUOT 2-four on 9.road

‘Tortoise kept four of his siblings on the road.’

(10) *kú ŋkam-sə (lá) sə-bo á mō*

give thousand-10 QUOT 10-two to 1SG

‘Give me two thousand.’





Adverbs are introduced solely by *ta*

(12)a. *wayn*      *yi* *dì* *ta'*      *ntē?*  
 1.child            P1    cry            QUOT    ADV

'The child cried only a little'

b. *vəwé* *tu?*      *ta'*      *ndzindzi*      *ətfo*      *ə*      *mə*  
 3PL    smash    QUOT            slowly pass    csc    finish

*mə*      *yəm*      *ətʃu'*      *ə*      *ηgəη*      *la'*      *ba:m*  
 then hit      5-mouth 5.AM 5.house QUOT IDEO

'They walked slowly to the door and then  
 slammed the door after them.'



Question: Where do Babanki quotative markers (clause linkers) come from?

Language internal evidence?

Grammaticalization of various morphemes observed in Babanki, e.g. tense markers: *ne* 'do' > *ne* 'immediate future', *lu* 'leave' > *lu* 'distant future'

Possible candidates for the origin of *lá/ta*

*lá*

*laʔa* 'announce'

*gaʔ* 'say'

*la* 'demonstrative reinforcer'    *ta* 'only'

*ta*

*taʔa* 'be(come) stiff'

*taʔ* 'reward', 'split', 'three'



## External evidence?

### Grassfields Bantu languages

#### Quotative

Babungo (South Ring)

*lāa* (Schuab 1985)

Kom (Central Ring)

*na* (Shultz 1997)

Kuk (Central Ring)

*h̃* (Kießling 2016)

Men (Central Ring)

*n̄* (Mua 2015)

Bafut (Ngemba: East Grassfields)

*m̄* (Tamanji 2009)

Lamnso' (East Ring)

*dzi* (Sala 1999)

Shupamem (Nun: East Grassfields)

*mi'* (Nchare 2005)



## External evidence?

Beyond Grassfields Bantu (Güldemann 2008)

Koyra Chiini (Songhay)

### Quotative

*kaa (ne)*

Ik (Kuliak)

*taa*

Fur (Furan)

*al*

Ngambay (Bongo-Bagirmi)

*nà*

Anywa (Nilotic)

*ní*

Krongo (Kadu)

*àní*

Sandawe (Isolate)

*ká''*

Khoekhoe (Khoe-Kwadi)

*ti*

External evidence?

Beyond Grassfields Bantu (Güldemann 2008)

Burunge (Cushitic)

Kera (Chadic)

Izon (Ijoid)

Kisi (Atlantic)

Supyire (Gur)

Koromfe (Gur)

Waja (Adamawa)

Ngbaka Ma'bo (Ubangi)

Yoruba (Benue-Congo)

Birom (Benue-Congo)

Quotative

*bee, tuba, and ta*

*míntí*

*ámèe*

*àà*

*na*

*ke*

*kən/mən*

*'bō*

*pé*

*wókɔ*



- ✓ The clause linkers cannot surface as verbal predicates that encode a simple state of affairs referring to speech, such as

*ə́ gaɾʔ kàɲù à wiɾʔ* 'to **say/tell** something to somebody',

\**la' kàɲù à wiɾʔ*

*ə́ gaɾʔ a' gaɾʔ a' kə́ dʒə́ m* 'to **talk/speak** the Kejom language'

\**la'/ta' gaɾʔ a' kə́ dʒə́ m*



- ✓ The clause linkers cannot undergo any derivational process they way speech verbs do.

*gaʔ-lə̀* *nántó* 'speaking too much'

\**la-lə̀*

- ✓ The clause linkers cannot be nominalized.

*à gaʔ à yó má* 'my language'    / *gaʔ* / 'say/tell'

\**la à yó má*



**Summary:** No evidence of borrowing, nor of the traditional default-like grammaticalization of speech verbs and subsequent chain-like development into different types of clause linkers.



“A quotative particle usually follows verbs of speech and cognition....introducing either direct or indirect speech. The particle, used alone, may indicate the speaker is repeating someone else’s words. **In many cases the particle cannot be considered a reduced form of any recognizable verb of speaking**” (Naden 1989: 165).



The quotative markers (clause linkers) appear to be innovated independently.

Babanki is one more language where quotative markers do not come from the grammaticalization of prior verbs but are innovated independently.

Since there are no verbs from which quotative markers originate in the Grassfields languages examined, it is possible that these languages do not follow the traditional default-like grammaticalization of speech verbs into different types of clause linkers.



Babanki quotative markers (clause linkers) are functionally highly versatile and build up an extremely wide network of uses. They “serve to insert a variety of expressions which can be characterized more generally as “mimetic” signs, comprising besides RD representational gesture, ideophones, and non-linguistic sound imitation” (Güldemann 2008: 275)



It appears that the clause linkers describe the way a speaker “PERFORMS the communicated state of affairs rather than linguistically describing it.... The speaker attempts to demonstrate, to reinstantiate, to imitate, to replay the event as close to the purported original as is desired in the context and as human means of expression allow him/her to do so” (Güldemann 2008: 286-287).



The uniqueness of these markers probably explains why they are innovated independently of verbs or nouns in Babanki (and other Grassfields Bantu languages).



Thank you for your kind attention!

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