

Locatives and bi-clausal progressives in Wolof*

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1. Introduction

In this paper we discuss the syntax of locative and progressive constructions in the Niger-Congo language Wolof. Wolof has a special clause type for locative predication and progressive structures characterized by the element *a-ngi*, as in (1) and (2).

- (1) *Locative predication*¹
Ma-**a-ngi** ci biir néeg bi.
1SG-C_{Wh}-LCL in stomach room the.SG
'I am in the room.'
- (2) *Progressive construction*
Ma-**a-ngi** di (> maangiy) ñew.
1SG-C_{Wh}-LCL IPFV come
'I am coming.'

We examine the syntax of constructions in Wolof which contain the element *a-ngi*, and put forward a novel proposal – that progressive sentences with *a-ngi* are bi-clausal. Specifically, we argue that they contain a locative clause and an infinitival imperfective clause.

We reanalyze the element *a-ngi*, and argue that it does not denote progressive aspect or presentative focus, as it is often interpreted in the literature (e.g. Dunigan 1994, Torrence 2005, 2012, Russell 2006), but that it is a bimorphemic element consisting of the A'-complementizer *a* and a locative clitic *ngi*.

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¹Abbreviations: ABS = absolutive, CM = class marker, COP = copula, DET = determiner, DIST = distal, EXPL = expletive, INF = infinitive, IPFV = imperfective, LCL = locative clitic, NML = nominalizer, OCL = object clitic, PL = plural, PROX = proximal, PRST = presentative, SG = singular

In section 2, we give an introduction to locative and progressive constructions and situate the case from Wolof in the cross-linguistic typology. Section 3 deals with the nature of the *a-ngi* element. Its distribution and behavior under extraction give evidence for our bi-morphemic reanalysis. In section 4, we discuss the syntactic structure of *a-ngi*-clauses. Evidence for the bi-clausal structure of progressive clauses comes from the position of verbal modifiers, the distribution of negation, and clitic climbing. Section 5 concludes.

2. Locatives and progressives

In many languages, clauses predicating location and progressives are related. Progressives often develop from or contain locative markers/copulas or entire locative constructions (Heine & Reh 1984, Heine et al. 1991, Demirdache & Uribe-Etxebarria 2000, Heine & Kuteva 2002). This is also the case in a number of Atlantic languages, of which Wolof is a member: a morpheme that occurs in locative constructions is also present in progressive structures, often referred to as *presentative* in the descriptive literature (Guérin 2016). (3) and (4) show this for Laalaa (Cangin, Senegal) and Joola Banjal (Atlantic, Senegal).

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|-----|---|-----|--|
| (3) | <i>Laalaa (Cangin)</i> (Guérin 2016, 464) | (4) | <i>Joola Banjal</i> (Guérin 2016, 468) |
| a. | Mi y-uu ga kaan.
1SG CM-PRST at home
'I am at home.' | a. | Atejo umu búsol yaj yayu.
Atejo COP behind house the
'Atejo is behing the house.' |
| b. | Mi y-uu tík cëen.
1SG CM-PRST cook dinner
'I am cooking dinner.' | b. | Atejo umu ni bu-rokk.
Atejo COP PREP INF-work
'Atejo is working.' |

Much work has shown that progressive constructions are often bi-clausal, consisting of a locative clause that embeds a nominalized complement clause or an adjunct (Comrie 1978, Bybee et al. 1994, Fontanals & Simon 1999, Polinsky & Comrie 2002, Laka 2006, Salanova 2007, Coon 2010). Take as an example the Basque sentences in (5). (5a) is a locative clause, consisting of the predicate 'be' and a locative PP. In (5b), the same predicate combines with a PP that takes a nominalized clause to yield a progressive interpretation. A bi-clausal analysis of this type is supported by the case marking facts in (5b). Basque has ergative-absolutive alignment. The clause in (5b) seemingly has two arguments (the subject 'the woman' and the object 'bread'), but the subject is marked as absolutive rather than ergative. Laka (2006) proposes that this is due to the fact that the verb *dago* 'be' is here not an auxiliary, but a matrix verb, 'the woman' being its only argument. The other verb, 'eat', is contained in a separate (nominalized) clause which constitutes an adjunct. Both verbs only have one argument, resulting in absolutive marking on both of them.

- (5) *Basque (Western varieties)* (Laka 2006:182)
- | | |
|----|---|
| a. | Emakume-a [pp Bilbo-n] dago .
woman-DET.ABS Bilbao-at is |
|----|---|

- 'The woman is in Bilbao.'*
- b. Emakume-a [PP ogi-a ja-te-n] dago.
 woman-DET.ABS bread-DET.ABS eat-NML-at is
'The woman is eating bread.'

This type of an analysis has been applied to a variety of languages, especially those that display split ergativity such as shown above for Basque (for a detailed review and a similar phenomenon in Chol, see Coon 2010). Our goal in this paper is to show that progressive clauses in Wolof are also bi-clausal, with a locative clause that contains a null locative predicate, and an infinitival imperfective clause with the second predicate.

3. The marker *a-ngi*

The characteristic marker *a-ngi* of progressive and locative clauses in Wolof is often classified as a progressive marker, which would make it an aspectual category. We show that this is not the case, and give evidence that *a-ngi* consists of two distinct morphemes, the A'-complementizer *a* and a locative clitic *ngi*.

3.1 *a-ngi* is not progressive aspect

We begin this section with a short background on Wolof clause-types and the behavior of verbal elements and aspectual morphology. All finite clauses in Wolof contain an overt complementizer, often said to encode different aspectual or information-structural properties. Martinović (2015a) distinguishes two syntactic clause types, one with verb movement to C (glossed C_V), in (6), and one with *wh*-movement to Spec,CP (C_{Wh}), in (7).

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>(6) <i>Verb raising sentence</i>
 Lek-na-a ceebujën.
 eat-C_V-1SG ceebujën
 <i>'I ate ceebujën.'</i></p> | <p>(7) <i>Wh-movement sentence</i>
 Lan la-ñu lekk?
 what C_{Wh}-3PL eat
 <i>'What did they eat?'</i></p> |
|--|--|

The complementizer in both clause-types is immediately followed by subject, object and locative clitics, and nothing can intervene between C and the clitic complex. In clauses in which the verb raises to C, it may either be the main verb, or the imperfective auxiliary *di*. This is the only aspectual morpheme in Wolof.² In clauses with *wh*-movement, the verbs and all verbal morphology stay below C. The two clause-types with the imperfective *di* are illustrated in (8) and (9), respectively.

- (8) *Verb raising clause with di*
Di-na-ñu ko lekk.
 IPFV-C_V-3PL OCL.3SG eat

²There is also a past habitual auxiliary *daan*. Its morphological composition is not well understood, but it appears to be bimorphemic, consisting of the imperfective auxiliary *di* and *aan*. We do not discuss it here as it is not relevant for the topic of this paper.

'They are going to eat it.'

- (9) *Wh-movement clause with di*
 Lan la-ñu **di** (>lañuy) lekk?
 what C_{Wh}-3PL IPFV eat
'What are they going to eat?'

The position of the complementizer in progressive and locative clauses is occupied by the element *a-ngi*, which is phonologically different from all other complementizers in Wolof, that have a (C)V form. In the literature it is commonly considered to be a progressive marker (e.g. Torrence 2005, 2012), as it occurs in default³ progressive clauses like (10).

- (10) *Default progressive clause in Wolof*
 Ma-**a-ngi** ko di (>maangiy) lëkk.
 1SG-C_{Wh}-LCL OCL.3SG IPFV eat
'I am eating.'

There are several reasons to believe that *a-ngi* itself is not a carrier of aspectual information. First, it occurs in the C position. This in itself is not evidence against its aspectual semantics – there are many languages that encode various verbal properties in C (e.g. tense in Irish, Chung & McCloskey 1987). In Wolof, however, this does not occur in other clause-types. Moreover, progressive clauses as in (10) also contain the imperfective auxiliary *di*. In other clause types, the addition of *di* yields several interpretations, depending on the context: habitual, future, and, crucially, progressive, illustrated in (11)-(12).

- (11) *VP focus clause with di*
 Da-ñu **di** (> dañuy) lekk jën.
 do.C_v-3SG IPFV eat fish
'They EAT/ARE EATING/WILL EAT fish.'

- (12) *Exhaustive DP focus clause with di*
 Saxaar si la- \emptyset **di** (> lay) dem ci midi.
 train the.SG C_{wh} IPFV leave at noon
'It's the train that leaves/will leave/is leaving at noon.'

Given the fact that imperfective aspect is already present in progressive clauses through *di*, and that *di* in other clauses also carries progressive meaning, it seems unlikely to us that another aspectual morpheme, in a fairly uncommon syntactic position as far as Wolof is concerned, would co-occur with it.

³By 'default', we mean sentences most commonly resorted to by speakers when asked for an information-structurally neutral progressive sentence. Note that progressive aspect may also be expressed in non-*a-ngi* clauses with the addition of the imperfective marker *di*, as in (11) and (12). Which clause is used depends on information structure.

and there is no verb raising.⁴ (19b), which retains the embedded verb-raising complementizer *na* under extraction, is ungrammatical.

- (18) Demba wax-na- \emptyset ni lekk-**na**-ñu ceeb.
 Demba say-C_v-3SG that eat-C_v-3PL rice
 ‘Demba said that they ate rice.’
- (19) *Long-distance extraction in Wolof*
- a. Kan_i **la** Demba wax ni mu-**a** t_i lëkk ceeb?
 who C_{Wh} Demba say that 3SG-C_{Wh} eat rice
 ‘Who did Demba say ate rice?’
- b. *Kan_i **la** Demba wax ni lekk-**na** t_i ceeb?
 what C_{Wh} Demba say that eat-C_v rice

Strong evidence that locative clauses contain the A'-complementizer *a* comes from the fact that they can be extracted out of. (20) illustrates an example of local subject extraction, and (21) of extraction out of the embedded clause. Note that in both cases *a-ngi* is retained.

- (20) *Matrix extraction out of a-ngi clause*⁵
- a. Téere b-**a**-ngi ci taabal bi.
 book the.SG-C_{wh}-LCL on table the.SG
 ‘The book is on the table.’
- b. Lan-**a**-ngi ci taabal bi?
 what-C_{wh}-LCL on table the.SG
 ‘What is on the table?’
- (21) *Long distance extraction out of a-ngi clause*
- a. Demba wax-na- \emptyset ni tééré b-**a**-ngi ci taabal bi.
 Demba say-C_v-3SG that book the.SG-C_{wh}-LCL on table the.SG
 ‘Demba said that the book was on the table.’
- b. Lan **la** Demba wax ni mu-**a**-ngi ci taabal bi?
 what C_{Wh} Demba say that 3SG-C_{wh}-LCL on table the.SG
 ‘What did Demba say was on the table?’

This leads us to conclude that *a* in *a-ngi* is the A'-movement complementizer, as the one in (19a).⁶

⁴Note that every long-distance subject extraction involves a resumptive pronoun in the local Spec,CP.

⁵A minority of our speakers do not accept matrix question with *a-ngi*; the variation is at this point not clear to us. Almost all speakers accept long-distant extraction exemplified in (21).

⁶A separate question is why A'-movement is involved in the formation of locative clauses. We do not address this here, but only note that verbless clauses with nominal predicates are also A'-movement constructions (see Klecha & Martinović forthcoming, Martinović 2013b, 2015a,b).

3.3 The status of *ngi*

We propose that the second part of the complex morpheme *a-ngi* is a locative clitic, on a par with similar elements that occur in locative existentials in Romance languages (French *y* 'there', Spanish *-y*, Catalan *hi*; Freeze 1992), as in the French example in (22).

- (22) Il **y** a un livre sur le table.
EXPL LCL has a book on the table
'There is a book on the table.'

Locative clitics in existentials in Romance seem to be redundant elements, co-occurring with other locative pronouns or PPs. *Ng* could be a similar element, since it occurs in the characteristic clitic position in Wolof to the right of the complementizer, where all pronominal clitics cluster (Russell 2006). Additionally, just like other pronouns and determiners in Wolof, *ngi* encodes proximity. Compare the encoding of proximity in the regular locative pronoun, *fi/fa* in (23), and the same phenomenon on *ngi* in (24). In both cases the final vowel indicates whether the location of an element is proximal or distal to that of the speaker.

- (23) *Wolof locative pronoun encodes proximity*

- a. Gis-na-a-ko-**fi**.
see-C_V-1SG-OCL.3SG-LCL.PROX
'I saw it here.'
- b. Gis-na-a-ko-**fa**.
see-C_V-1SG-OCL.3SG-LCL.DIST
'I saw it there.'

- (24) *ngi encodes proximity*

- a. Mu-a-**ngi** (> mungi) fi.
s/he-C_{Wh}-LCL.PROX here
'S/He is here.'
- b. Mu-a-**nga** (> munga) faa.
s/he-C_{Wh}-LCL.DIST there
'S/He is there.'

Support for our proposal also comes from Guérin's (2016) PhD thesis on Wolof verbal constructions. In reviewing locatives and progressives in Atlantic languages, Guérin (2016) notes that these types of markers often consist of deictic markers (one or possibly two) and noun class markers. In some languages the locative/progressive marker has verbal characteristics; in Wolof it clearly does not (Guérin 2016, 474-475). Guérin also makes an interesting suggestion regarding the origin of the *ng* element. Since in many languages one part of the locative/progressive marker is a class marker, Guérin proposes that this may also

be the case in Wolof, where the nominal class *g-* is often used for toponyms, and the *n/ng* alternation is a common initial morphophonological alternation in Wolof.

The discussion we presented in this section supports our proposal that *a-ngi* is a bimorphemic element, consisting of the *wh*-movement complementizer and a locative clitic, and does not contribute any progressive meaning itself.

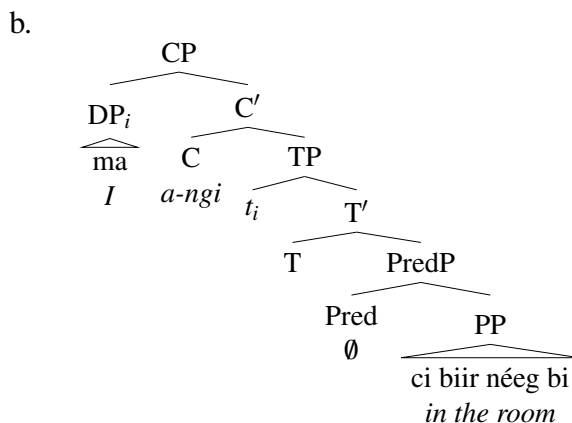
4. The syntax of *a-ngi* clauses

Thus far we have established that the marker *a-ngi* that occurs in locative and progressive constructions in Wolof is not a verbal element, and does not mark progressive aspect, but contains the *A'*-complementizer *a*, and the locative clitic *ngi*. In this section we address the syntactic structure of clauses with *a-ngi*. We specifically focus on progressive constructions and propose that they are bi-clausal, consisting of a locative clause, and a non-finite imperfective complement/adjunct clause.

The structure of a locative clause is in (25). The locative predicate is null and takes a PP complement. As noted, the lack of a copula is not restricted to this clause-type, clauses with nominal predicates are also copula-less. Locative clauses can also contain the existential verb *nekk* 'be', though this is used only in the presence of negation (see section 4.2).

(25) *Locative clause*

- a. Ma-a-ngi ci biir néeg bi.
 1SG-C_{Wh}-LCL in stomach room the.SG
 'I am in the room.'

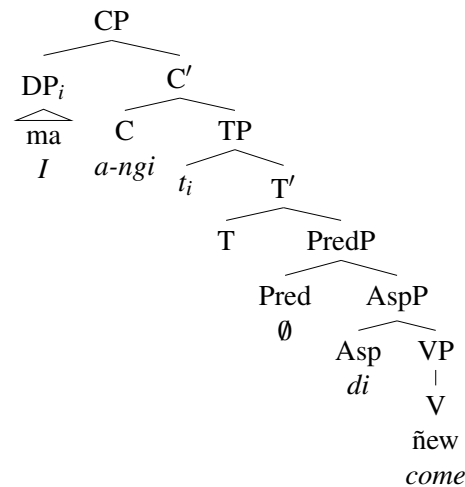


We propose that progressive clauses consist of the locative clause as in (25), in which the null predicate takes a reduced infinitival imperfective clause as a complement.

(26) *Progressive clause*

- a. Ma-a-ngi di (> maangiy) ñew.
 1SG-C_{Wh}-LCL IPFV come
 'I am coming.'

b.



In our analysis therefore, *a-ngi* progressives contain two predicates: a (covert) locative verb and the verb in the complement clause (*ñew* in (26)). We leave the exact structure of the complement clause vague; we will present evidence that its structure is reduced, as it cannot contain negation (see § 4.2). It also does not appear to be nominalized, as *di* + V does not have the distribution of a DP. Further research is required to ascertain all its properties.

The second clause in bi-clausal progressive clauses in other languages are sometimes argued to be complements, and sometimes adjuncts (Laka 2006, Salanova 2007, Coon 2010). We classify the infinitival clause in Wolof as a complement, as it can be extracted out of, as in (21), and adjunct clauses in Wolof are islands for extraction (Torrence 2012).

The strongest evidence for the bi-clausal analysis of progressives comes from the distribution of PP adjuncts. We also present indirect evidence from negation to argue against a mono-clausal structure, and data from clitic climbing which support our proposal that the complement clause is reduced.

4.1 PP modifiers

The first piece of evidence for the proposed clause structure comes from PP verbal modifiers (e.g. ‘in fear’). In other clause-types they can only ever follow and never precede the verb, as in (27).

(27) *PP verbal modifier can only follow the verb*

- a. Da-ma di (> damay) lekk **ci tiitange**.
do.C_V-1SG IPFV eat in fear
'I'm EATING in fear.'
- b. *Da-ma di (> damay) **ci tiitange** lekk.
do.C_V-1SG IPFV in fear eat
- c. *Da-ma **ci tiitange** di lekk.
do.C_V-1SG in fear IPFV eat

In progressives, however, the PP adjunct can occur either before or after *di*, as in (28). This suggests that, when the PP precedes the progressive verb, there has to exist a higher verb in the structure for it to modify. We propose this to be the locative predicate. Therefore, the verb *lekk* is contained in a separate VP.

(28) *PP modifier can either follow or precede the progressive verb*

- a. Ma-a-*ngi* $\emptyset_{\text{Loc.Pred}}$ **ci tiitange** [*di* *lekk*].
 1SG-C_{Wh}-LCL in fear [IPFV eat]
 ‘I am in fear, eating.’
- b. Ma-a-*ngi* $\emptyset_{\text{Loc.Pred}}$ [*di* *lekk* **ci tiitange**].
 1SG-C_{Wh}-LCL [IPFV eat in fear]
 ‘I am eating in fear.’

It is also possible to independently modify the two predicates, as in (29).⁷

(29) *PPs modifying both predicates*

- Ma-a-*ngi* **ci tiitange** *di* *lekk* **ci ñakk pexe**.
 1SG-C_{Wh}-LCL in fear IPFV eat in lack way
 ‘I am in fear, eating involuntarily (lit. in lack of a way/choice).’

We take the position of PP verbal modifiers to offer strong evidence for the bi-clausal analysis of the *a-ngi* progressives.

4.2 Negation

Another piece of evidence in support of a bi-clausal evidence comes from negation. Negation in Wolof can occur in all finite clauses affixed onto the verb or the imperfective auxiliary *di*. Examples are given in (30).

(30) *Negation is a verbal suffix*

- a. Da-ma *lekk-**ul*** céeb.
 do.C_V-1SG eat-NEG rice
 ‘I didn’t EAT rice.’
- b. Da-ma d(i)-**ul** *lekk* céeb.
 do.C_V-1SG IPFV-NEG eat rice
 ‘I’m not EATING rice.’

Neither locative clauses nor, more importantly, the *a-ngi* progressives, can contain negation. As far as locative clauses are concerned, this is not surprising; copula-less clauses

⁷For some speakers this was a more difficult context to construe, it seemed mostly because of the meaning of the two PPs and how they relate to the event being described. Some also preferred a pause between the two clauses, or adding ‘because’.

'Fatou tried to cook ceebujën.'

- b. *Faatu jéem-na- \emptyset [togg-ul ceebujën].
 Fatou try-C_v-3SG [cook-NEG ceebujën]
 intended: *'Fatou tried to not cook ceebujën.'*
- c. Faatu jéem-na- \emptyset [bañ-a-togg ceebujën].
 Fatou try-C_v-3SG [refuse-LINK-cook ceebujën]
'Fatou tried to refuse to cook ceebujën.'

Negation in Wolof is high, above the TP (Torrence 2005, 2012, Martinović 2015a). Martinović (2015a) proposes that infinitival clauses are smaller than the TP (at most as big as AspP), which is why they cannot contain NegP. Whatever the correct analysis of the inability of infinitival clauses to contain negation, the fact that this is also the case in progressive clauses supports the bi-clausal analysis advanced in this paper.

4.3 Clitic climbing

Finally, we offer tentative evidence for a reduced clausal structure of the infinitival clause in progressives by looking at the phenomenon of clitic climbing, generally used to diagnose restructuring (Wurmbrand 2001). In restructuring contexts, clitics may climb out of certain embedded infinitival clauses to the matrix clitic cluster position. In (34), the object clitic *-ko* moves up from the position of the complement of the embedded verb to the matrix C.

- (34) *Clitic climbing from an infinitival clause*
 Faatu jéem-na- \emptyset -**ko** toggu.
 Fatou try-C_v-3SG-OCL.3SG cook
'Fatou tried to cook it.'

The same is observed in progressive clauses, where the object clitic of the verb in the infinitival clause climbs to the matrix C.

- (35) *Clitic climbing from the progressive clause*
 Ma-a-**ngi-ko** di (> maangikoy) lekk.
 1SG-C_{Wh}-LCL-OCL.3SG IPFV eat
'I am eating it.'

No research exists on restructuring in Wolof, so we do not have more to say about this. Future work will explore the syntax of infinitival clauses in general and in progressives.

5. Conclusion

In this paper we address the syntax of Wolof locative and progressive constructions, which both use the marker *a-ngi*. We argue *a-ngi* to be a bimorphemic element, consisting of the A'-movement complementizer *a* and a locative clitic *ngi*, and not a progressive/presentative

marker, as usually classified in the literature. We also claim that progressive sentences with *a-ngi* are bi-clausal constructions, containing locative clauses which take imperfective infinitival clauses as complements. This work gives further cross-linguistic support for the bi-clausality of progressive structures and enriches the typology of bi-clausal progressives by uncovering variation in the type of adjunct/complement a locative clause can take.

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