CARITIVE CONSTRUCTIONS IN MWAN

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Abstract: The paper deals with strategies for expressing caritive meanings in Mwan (Niger-Congo < Mande < South Mande). The difference between the strategies used in Mwan and in some other languages of the same family (Gban, Looma, Bambara) is discussed. Conclusions are made about the grammaticalization of constructions with the suffix -kle and the postposition blaan into specialized caritive means.

Key words: Mwan, South Mande, Bambara, caritive constructions

1. Introduction

The caritive is a relatively new “comparative concept” (Haspelmath 2010), which is defined in Oskolskaya et al. (2020: 7) as follows: “caritive describes non-involvement (including, but not limited to
absence) of a participant (Absentee) in a situation, with the non-involvement predication semantically modifying the situation or a participant of another situation”.

The caritive in African languages is practically not studied. I am only aware of studies conducted as part of the caritive research project (Oskolskaya 2019; Fedotov 2020; Mishchenko 2020). It should be noted that, despite the relative genetic proximity of Mwan to Looma and Gban, there are not so many similarities in terms of expressing caritive meanings. More similarity is observed between the means of expressing caritive meanings between Mwan and Bambara.

2. Data and methodology

The data were collected by the author during several field trips to the Ivory Coast (2003–2020). The following types of data were used:
a) spontaneous narratives and dialogues;
b) written sources (stories, book of proverbs);
c) elicited data. I used the caritive questionnaire designed by Sofia Oskolskaya (2018; 2020).

The next stage was the analysis and comparison of the data obtained. The proportion of caritive constructions of different types in natural and elicited data was taken into account. The results obtained for Mwan were compared with the materials on Gban, Looma and Bambara. The conclusion about the grammaticalization of the suffix -kle and the postposition blaan into a specialized caritive marker was made.

3. Caritive constructions in Mwan

3.1. Overview of caritive constructions in Mwan

Mwan uses the following means to express caritive values:

– word-level negation (suffix -kle):

(1) nɛ̀ de-kle nɛɛ-kle
    child father-NEG mother-NEG
    ‘fatherless motherless child’
combinations with certain nouns or adjectives:

(2) *gbàán wee kpu*

dog tail piece
‘dog without tail (it was cut off)’.

(3) *À són kló ò.*

3SG.NSBJ tooth idle COP
‘S/he is without teeth’

pospositions *blaan* ‘after’ and *zanta* ‘behind’:

(4) *À de blaan ga kpà-à à ma.*

3SG.NSBJ father after illness put-PFV 3SG.NSBJ on
‘Without his father he fell ill (lit. After his father the illness fell on him).’

dependent clauses with existential negation:

(5) *Nè é nu-à yaa é lé ké bɔtɔ̀ l'àò (à kɔ́ɔ́).*

child ART come-PFV yam art with and bag
COP.NEG 3SG.NSBJ hand
‘The child brought this yam without a bag (in his hands).’

general verbal negation:

(6) *È jà ké yaa púbo wo.*

3SG go.PFV and NEG greeting do
‘He left without saying good-bye.’

The next section contains the analysis of the presented above means of transmitting the caritive values in Mwan.
3.2. Attributive caritive constructions

3.2.1. Constructions with the suffix -kle

I classify the marker -kle as a derivative suffix which cannot be used independently (for details see Perekhvalskaya 2015). It can be attached to nouns or verbs turning them into words used as noun modifiers.

With nouns -kle forms adjectives which have caritive meaning, see (7).

(7) a. wɛɛ ‘tail’ gbàán wɛɛkle ‘dog without tail’
b. gaan ‘foot, wheel’ sòó gaankle ‘bycicle without wheel’
c. wíŋ ‘top’ fè wíŋkle ‘house without roof’
d. tre ‘eye’ mèe trekle ‘blind person (without eyes)’

It is worth noting that in (7) we deal with inalienable nouns. Examples (8) demonstrate the use of -kle with alienable nouns, in this case the complex N-kle is linked to the preceding NP with the postposition lé ‘with’.

(8) a. zìè ‘sauce’ pebhle zìèkle lé ‘food without sauce’
b. kulanj ‘electricity’ wàła kulanjkle lé ‘village without electricity’

This shows that the suffix -kle can be classified as a dedicated caritive means. Constructions presented in (8) may be translated as “with without-N” or probably deserve the label “anticomitative” (Kämpfe & Volodin 1995).

With verbs, -kle forms attributive constructions with negative meaning (9).

(9) a. À maza ò wèën mí-kle глбан
   3.SG.NSBJ need COP wine drink-NEG guy
   do ma.
   one on
   ‘He needs a guy who doesn’t drink alcohol.’
b. *Nè yá-kle mu é, ò sélí wo Wàànbhaa ni child give.birth-NEG PL ART 3PL prayer do god to ké ò nè sró wò.
and 3PL child getting do
‘Childless (women), they pray to God to have children.’

These constructions could be analyzed as negative participles or negative converbs, as in Mwan unmarked verbs cannot be used as NPs.

3.2.2. Combining with the relational noun kpu or the adjective kló

The suffix -kle denotes the situation of the absence of a participant as stable. If it is known or supposed that the NP became N-less at certain point, it should be explicit.

(10) a. gbàán wee kpu ‘dog with cut tail’
b.  mëe gaan kpu ‘man without leg’

Combinations with kpu are genitive constructions as kpu is a relational noun ‘piece, something that was cut off’: cf. bluu lè kpu ‘the end of the bread’; diŋ yri kpu ‘a cut piece of a tree’; blàkɔ kpu ‘a cork made of a piece of bamboo’. So, examples presented in (10) are just particular cases of the use of kpu. However, its usage is obligatory if the way of the loss was known or presumed (11).

(11) a. mëe gaan kpu ‘man without leg (with leg cut)’
b.  *mëe gaankle

(11b) is denied on semantic reasons: it would mean that a person was born without legs, which is considered impossible.

The adjective kló ‘idle, useless’ forms the attributive construction with the Absentee (12).
(12) *Mànì dà-à Bíjàn ké à sónbhɛ kló ò.*
Mani return-PFV Abidjan and 3SG.NSBJ tooth idle COP
‘Mani returned from Abidjan without a tooth.’

In my corpus, *kló* in caritive constructions occurs only with nouns *són* ‘teeth’, *sónbhɛ* ‘tooth’. Taking into account expressions like *fɛ̀* *kló* ‘unfinished house’ it may be supposed that *kló* points out to something incomplete that lacks an integral part.

### 3.3. Constructions with postpositions

The meanings of concomitant circumstances, a cause or a condition as well as the absence of a companion and the addition of a participant are most often coded by the postposition *blaan* ‘after’ or much less often by the postposition *zanta* ‘behind’. We deal here with the expansion of the meaning ‘after / behind N’ → ‘without N’.

Consider the following examples: cause (13), condition (14); concomitant circumstances (15); absence of a participant (16); addition of a participant (17).

(13) *Nìiií ò yrɛ̀tɛ́ blaan.*
cold COP sun after
‘It is cold without sun.’

(14) *Mɛɛ laa sɔ bo-lè trɛ́ ta yì*
person NEG can rest-SBJV earth on water
*pegéé peɓle blaan.*
and food after
‘Man cannot live on the earth without water and food.’

(15) *À nɛɛ blaan ga kpà-à nè é ma.*
3SG.NSBJ mother after illness put-PFV child ART on
‘Without the mother the child fell ill.’

(16) a. *Ŋ́ nu ge-le Bíjàn é zanta.*
1SG FUT go-SUP Abidjan 2SG behind
‘I will go to Abidjan without you.’
b. Yaá  nu-lɛ  é  de  blaan!
2SG.NEG.COP  come-SUP  2SG  father  after
‘Do not come without your father!’

1SG.EMPH  after  person  five  FOC  COP.PFV
‘There were five people besides me.’
b. Yáa  sróókpá  gbɛ  bhɛ̀ɛ̀ké  láò  lì  bhé  blaan  ee?
2SG.Poss  song  manner  other  cop.neg  ever  this  after  Q
‘Don’t you have another song, apart from that one?’

The example (17b) presents a negative question; the negative copula is not connected with the caritive construction that uses the postposition blaan (bhé blaan ‘besides this one’).

The following examples (18a–b) should be interpreted as condition or concomitant circumstances and not as absence of an instrument; as the latter meaning (to do something without NP) is expressed by dependent copular negative clauses, see §3.4.

(18) a. Waa  sɔ  wi  de-lɛ  màfå  blaan.
3P.NEG  can  animal  kill-SBJV  gun  after
‘One can’t kill an animal without a gun.’
b. Waa  sɔ  yrí  kláá-lé  poo  blaan.
3PL.NEG  can  tree  chop-SBJV  ax  after
‘One can’t chop down a tree without an ax.’

3.4. Negative copular clauses

In my data, the meanings of the absence of content, means of transportation, tool or temporarily possessed object are encoded by copular negative clauses with the negative copula láò / làò. These clauses are often but not always introduced by the conjunction ké. This conjunction has a large range of usages and in this case it denotes an action simultaneous with the action of the main clause. Consider the following examples:
Absense of content (19).

(19) *Mɛɛ ɛ́ nù-à bɔ̀lɔ̀ lé ké bhlɔ̀n láò*

*person ART come-PFV sack with and rice COP.NEG à ò yì.*

‘This person brought a bag without rice (lit. The person came with a bag and the rice was not in it).’

Absence of tool (20).

(20) *Búàtí é lií gùà ké wla làò á kóɔ.*

can ART mouth leave.PFV and knife COP.NEG 3SG.NSBJ hand

‘He opened a can without a knife (lit. The can was open and he had no knife in his hands).’

Absence of temporary possessed object (21).

(21) *È jà Bíjà ké gɔ̀lí láò á kóɔ.*

3SG go.PFV Abidjan and money COP.NEG 3SG.NSBJ hand

‘He went to Abidjan without money (in his hands).’

Absence of clothes (22)–(23).

(22) *Nɛ̀ mu é blasan zí ké dunɛ̀ láò ò ta.*

child PL ART run PROG and clothes COP.NEG 3PL on

‘Children are running without clothes (on them).’

(23) *Ba le mu laa tááwo ké srùŋghɔɔ́ láò ò Jula woman PL NEG walk and scarf COP.NEG 3PL ngbhlo ma.*

head on

‘Jula women do not walk without scarf on the head.’
Absence of material (24).

(24) È fɛ́ é dùà ké làsò làò à ba.
3SG house ART put.PFV and cement COP.NEG 3SG.NSBJ in
‘He built the house without cement (in it).’

The examples (19)–(24) demonstrate the strategy used mostly in elicited examples. In these cases, the exact role of the absentee is specified by the postpositional phrase in the dependent clause’. The role of absentee may not be specified, as in (25).

Absence of means of transportation (25).

(25) Lenɛ̀ nù-à Lroŋla à gaan ma
girl come-PFV Sukuruban1 3SG.NSBJ foot on
ké mótó làò.
and motocycle COP.NEG
‘The girl came to Sukuruban without a motocycle (because there was no motocycle).’

The dependent clause may be structured as a relative one, as in (26) with relativizer lá in the main clause, for relative clasus in Mwan see Perekhvalskaya (2007).

(26) Ðɔɔ̀ zi lá glììŋ zí ké glù
1SG.COP road REL look.for prog and hole
láò à liì.
COP.NEG 3SG.NSBJ on
‘I am looking for a road without holes.’

In (26), the relativizer lá follows the head zi ‘road’, which has the antecedent in the dependent clause the pronoun à (lì)ì ‘(on) it’.

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1 The Jula and official name of the Lroŋla village is Sukuruban.
3.5. Competing strategies and lexical means

3.5.1. Competing strategies

In many cases, several strategies may be used to encode the same meaning, cf. (27).

(27) a. Srɔǎsɛ́mi ɛ́ dà-à glɔe ma ké à
soldier ART return-PFV war on and 3SG.NSBJ
gaan do làò.
leg one COP.NEG
‘The soldier returned from the war without a leg.’ {a=b}

b. Srɔǎsɛ́mi ɛ́ dà-à glɔe ma ké à
soldier ART return-PFV war on COMIT 3SG.NSBJ
gaan do kpú lé.²
leg one piece with

In (27a), the caritive meaning is encoded by the copular clause, and in (27b) the construction with the noun kpu ‘piece’ is used.

Rather widespread is the strategy described by Maksim Fedotov for Gban: “Lexical means can also be employed — with a greater or lesser loss of semantic detail. For example, ‘The bus departed without me’ can be rendered in Gban as, literally, “The bus left me” (Fedotov 2020: 190). The same is also characteristic for Mwan, consider the following translations (28)–(29).

(28) [Stimulus: “The Abidjan bus goes without a stop in Kongasso”.
Bíjà goŋ è nu ké yaa duláá Kongopla.
Abidjan car ART come and 3SG.NEG stop Kongasso
‘Abidjan bus comes and doesn’t stop in Kongasso.’

(29) [Stimulus: “He constructed the house without cement”.
È fɛ́ é dùà ké pɛ̀ɛ̀ lé.
3SG house ART put.PFR COMIT clay with
‘He constructed the house with clay.’

² In (27b) and (29), the comitative frame construction ké ... lé ‘with’ is used.
4. Discussion and conclusion

As it follows from the analysis given in the previous section, Mwan has more diverse means of expressing caritive meanings than Gban and Looma.

According to Fedotov, “Gban <…> has no specialized markers to express caritive semantics, neither affixes nor adpositions (Fedotov 2020: 18). To encode caritive semantics Gban uses multi-clausal periphrases and lexical means (see §3.5.2) as well as comitative postposition with clausal negation, “for example, ‘He’s working without a hoe’ can be rendered as, literally, “He’s not working with a hoe” (Fedotov 2020: 19).

Looma also demonstrates the absence of special means of expressing caritive meanings. “The main way to express caritive semantics is the use of various constructions, which include negation. So, for example, sentence <‘Koluma came without a husband’> literally is ‘Koluma came, her husband did not come’, sentence <‘I went to the market without money’> is ‘I went to the market, I had no money’. Both sentences represent the only way to express the respective meanings in Looma” (Mischenko 2020: 85).

It is worth comparing Mwan data to Bambara, which is perhaps better described than most Mande languages, see also Bambara corpus (Vydrin et al. 2011–2018).

There are two derivational suffixes in Bambara that encode caritive meaning: the participle suffix -bali and the adjective suffix -ntan. The suffix -ntan is used in a more or less similar way to the Mwan suffix -kle (§3.2.1), see (30).

(30) a. tìgi ‘master’ fāli tìgintan ‘donkey without master (masterless donkey).’

b. nòn ‘millet’ gàtigi nòntan ‘householder without millet’.3

3 These and further Bambara examples from the Corpus of Bambara were provided by Valentin Vydrin.
The participle suffix -bali has no parallels in Mwan. It denotes “negative agent or patient”, see (31).

(31) Tìle bán-bali tɛ́.  
sun finish-PTCP,PRIV COP.NEG  
‘There are no days without end (lit: non-finishing suns (=days) do not exist).’

Other Mande languages, namely Gban, Looma and Dan (Vydrin, personal communication), do not possess similar caritive means. Still, it does not seem probable that the privative suffix -kle in Mwan would be a loan from Jula which is a widespread trade dialect of Bambara. In fact, being close by the meaning these suffixes (Mwan -kle and Bambara -ntan) are completely different in their forms which prevent us from making assumptions of a possible direct loan.

Another interesting parallel is the use of the Bambara postposition kó ‘behind, after’ which also encodes the meaning ‘besides, except, in the absence of’, see (32)–(33).

(32) Júgu té mògɔ lá bàna-jugu kó.  
enemy COP.NEG man to illness-evil after  
‘Man has no other enemy except for a dangerous disease.’

(33) À fɔ́-rά ń kó.  
3SG fail-PFV.INTR 1SG after  
‘He came in my absence.’ (Vydrin 2019: 78).

Here again we find a similarity in the way the primary meaning ‘after, behind’ is extended: ‘behind, after’ > ‘in the absence’ > ‘without’ (see §3.3). There is no information about the use of a postposition with

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4 « Il exprime : - la valeur d’agent négatif <et> la valeur de patient négatif » (Vydrin 2019: 232), in other words, V-bali means ‘which does not V’ with intransitive verbs, cf. mògɔ kúma-bali ‘silent (non-speaking) person’ (kúma ‘to speak’) or ‘which is not V-ed’ with transitive verbs, cf. jóli fùrakɛ-bali ‘unhelaed wound’ (fùrake ‘to heal’).
the meaning ‘after’ in caritive constructions in other Mande languages. At the same time, the Mwan postposition *blaan* and the Bambara *kó* have no similarity in form. So, it is not the case of a direct loan. It should also be noted that in Mwan the caritive usage of *blaan* is rather widespread, see examples (13)–(18).

The comparison between natural and elicited examples in Mwan shows that caritive constructions with the suffix *-kle* and the postposition *blaan* differ from other strategies. Unlike the latter they are used in natural contexts, including traditional folk tales. On the contrary, in my corpus of natural texts there are no instances of the use of the negative copula *láò / làò* in caritive constructions. In the corpus, the negative copula is used only in existential negative constructions. The fact that the suffix *-kle* and the postposition *blaan* with the caritive meaning occur in traditional narratives seems important. These are functional styles less affected by French or town-styles of speech. The following conclusion can be made: these means are the only true caritive markers used in natural speech. The suffix *-kle* can be classified as a dedicated caritive means.

### Abbreviations

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<th>ART</th>
<th>article</th>
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<td>comitative</td>
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<td>copula</td>
<td>PFV</td>
<td>perfective</td>
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