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► **To cite this version:**

Maximilien Guérin. Review of Gregory D. S. Anderson, *Auxiliary verb constructions in the languages of Africa*, 2011. *Linguistique et Langues Africaines*, 2015, 1, pp.118-122. halshs-01190724v2

HAL Id: halshs-01190724

<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-01190724v2>

Submitted on 6 Feb 2016

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Gregory D. S. ANDERSON, “Auxiliary Verb Constructions in the Languages of Africa”. *Studies in African Linguistics* 40 (1 & 2) [Special issue], 2011, 410 p.

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This volume is a typological study of inflection in auxiliary verb constructions of the languages of Africa. It was published as a special issue of the journal ‘Studies in African Linguistics’. The advantage of this format is the open access¹, granted by the journal’s editorial politics. Nevertheless, I regret the lack of a table of contents, which might have proved useful for a 400-page book. This work follows on from Anderson (2006), which studies auxiliary verb constructions from a broad typological point of view. As noted by Amha (2010), in Anderson (2006) “a large number of African languages feature in the discussion (173 of them are included in the database)”. Indeed data from African languages are important in the study of auxiliary verb constructions, and therefore an in-depth study completely dedicated to African languages is clearly justified. In this review I shall deal mainly with features particular to auxiliary verb constructions in African languages. For a review of general aspects of auxiliary verb constructions developed by Anderson (2006), see Amha (2010) or Vadja (2010).

In the introduction, the author defines what he means by ‘auxiliary verb’, ‘auxiliary verb construction’ and ‘inflection’. An auxiliary verb is “a verbal element on a diachronic form-function continuum standing between a fully lexical verb and a bound grammatical affix”. An auxiliary verb construction (AVC) is defined as “a mono-clausal structure minimally consisting of a lexical verb element that contributes lexical content to the construction and an auxiliary verb element that contributes some grammatical or functional content to the construction”. ‘Inflection’ is understood as “the formal encoding of grammatical or functional properties of a well-formed utterance”.

Anderson’s corpus is impressive, since it represents approximately 500 African languages coming from over ninety different families (plus some genetically unclassifiable languages). All of the four African phyla (Nilo-Saharan, Khoisan, Afroasiatic and Niger-Congo) are well represented, as may be noticed from appendices 1b and 2 (which provide the list of languages sorted by country and genetic family). Nevertheless, not all data are equally reliable, as some of them happen to be third-hand (e.g. Basaa, Diola Fogny or Wolof). This results in a few mistakes in the

1. <http://journals.linguisticsociety.org/elanguage/sal/article/view/3085.html>

analysis of various examples. For instance, for Wolof markers in (739) [p. 220] :

(1) **nga dem**

PST: 2 go

You went.

(2) **mungi jàng-al eleew yi téereem (téere-am)**

PRS: 3 read-APPL pupil the: PL book-his

He is reading his book to the pupils.

This analysis disagrees with the analyses proposed by all of the specialists of this language. In fact, *nga* is generally analyzed (Church 1981; Robert 1991; Torrence 2013) as a pronoun peculiar to narrative (or subjunctive) constructions (no specific past (PST) meaning), and *mungi* as a fused subject/TAM marker of presentative or progressive (not as a present (PRS) marker). However, these few mistakes do not seriously question Anderson's typology. Furthermore, as in appendix 1a, he gives the sources consulted for each language, one can easily check which material he has based himself on.

In sections 1 to 3, the author presents a general overview of the typology of AVCs in African languages. His typology is based on the notion of 'headedness'. He distinguishes three relevant levels of headedness: the inflectional head (morphosyntactic locus of inflection), the phrasal head (or syntactic head) and the semantic head. The phrasal head is generally the auxiliary verb, the semantic head is always the lexical verb, so the only really relevant variable in the headedness status of AVCs is the inflectional head. Thus, AVCs display five macro-patterns, all well attested in African languages: AUX-headed pattern (the auxiliary verb is the inflectional head), Doubled pattern (auxiliary verb and lexical verb are inflectional co-heads), Split pattern (inflectional features split between lexical verb and auxiliary verb), Split/Doubled pattern (some features show doubled pattern, others split pattern) and LEX-headed pattern (the lexical verb is the inflectional head). Appendices 3 to 6 provide the list of the languages of the corpus according to their pattern.

In section 4, Anderson gives an overview of the most common sources that evolve into AVCs in African languages. According to his definitions, AVCs are midpoints in the well-known continuum of grammaticalization: lexical verb [+ syntagma] > auxiliary verb [+ lexical verb] > affix[-verb head]. Thus, "AVCs derive from other complex structures through the specialization of originally content verbal semantics into the expression of functional or grammatical categories". Anderson does not provide an exhaustive list of source-target pairs in African AVCs, but he refers the reader to several reference works which investigate this issue. Nevertheless, he notices that some source-target semantic correlations are particularly common throughout Africa, irrespective of genetic families (i.e. 'come' > Future). Moreover, he gives some clear instances of typical

correlations. However, it is not clear whether these grammaticalization paths are more common in African languages than in other areas of the world. To my mind, these correlations should be compared with those mentioned in typological studies, such as Heine & Kuteva (2002). Anderson also shows that the syntactic constructional sources of AVCs in African languages are the same as in other languages: serial verb constructions, verb complement constructions and clause-chaining constructions.

In section 5, Anderson discusses some grammaticalization paths of AVCs in African languages. As he notices, “one of the most common sources crosslinguistically of tense, aspect, and mood morphology is an auxiliary verb construction”. These grammaticalization paths are not peculiar to African languages. However, in the note (27) [p. 89], he points out differences of analysis due to the existence of divergent academic traditions in African linguistics. Indeed, “often the anglophone literature will analyze strings as component affixes within single words, while francophone literature considers these to be strings of phonological words”. Thus, the same construction could be analyzed as a complex verb form in the English-speaking tradition and as an AVC in the French-speaking tradition. Furthermore, Anderson mentions another prosodophonological integration of AVCs: fused subject/TAM forms. Indeed, several languages of three separate areal clusters (Macro-Sudan Belt, Tanzanian Rift Valley, Cushitic) display some ‘tense-marked pronouns’. He analyses these forms as resulting from “the fusing of subject pronouns (or agreement morphology) with highly eroded auxiliary verbs”. Appendix 7 provides a list of the languages with fused subject/TAM forms and fused complex verb forms derived therefrom.

Sections 6 to 9 examine AVCs in four genetic families: Bantu, Chadic, Khoe and Nilotic. In most Bantu languages, AVCs display AUX-headed patterns, Doubled patterns or Split/Doubled patterns; this last one is more common in Bantu than in any other African family. In (Split/) Doubled patterns, the doubled category is nearly always the subject. Large fused complex verb forms, i.e. highly synthetic verb forms resulting from the fusing of AVCs are typical of Bantu languages. The section on Chadic languages is less detailed. Anderson points out two features of this family: intransitive copy pronouns (i.e. a redundant subject marker which appears only on intransitive verbs) and tensed pronouns (or fused subject auxiliary forms). However, these features are commonly found in many languages of the Macro-Sudan Belt and therefore, cannot be considered as typical of Chadic. The section on Khoe languages is very brief. The only salient feature of this family is the extensive use of fused complex verb forms. In section 9, Anderson shows that the features of AVCs in Nilotic languages differ according to the sub-groups of this branch of Nilo-Saharan: Eastern Nilotic, Western Nilotic and Southern Nilotic. Unlike most African families, LEX-headed

patterns are relatively common in Nilotic AVCs, although AUX-headed patterns and Doubled patterns are also frequently found. In addition to that, Anderson lists some differences among Nilotic sub-groups with regard to the fused AVC forms.

Sections 10 to 12 examine AVCs in three African Sprachbünde detailed in Heine & Nurse (2008): Tanzanian Rift Valley, Ethiopia, and Macro-Sudan Belt. The Tanzanian Rift Valley is a contact area including Southern Cushitic, Southern Nilotic, Bantu and two isolate (or Khoe) languages. Despite the many phonological and morphosyntactic features shared by these languages, they do not have a clear common AVC profile. The only typical feature pointed out by the author is the relatively low frequency of AUX-headed patterns. The Ethiopian linguistic area includes Afroasiatic (Cushitic, Omotic, Semitic) and Nilo-Saharan languages. There too, there does not seem to be any areal inflectional pattern for AVCs in these languages. However, according to Anderson, the most common patterns are: AUX-headed pattern (with the lexical verb in a non-finite form) and complex verb forms that derive from a double fusing of auxiliaries (i.e. subject-encoding auxiliary incorporated into a larger complex as suffix on the lexical verb). There are other widespread features of AVCs, but they differ from family to family. In section 12, the author presents data from the biggest linguistic area of Africa, the Macro-Sudan Belt. The core of this area consists of Adamawa, Ubangian, non-Bantu Benue-Congo, Bongo-Bagirmi, Moru-Mangbetu, Kwa, Kru, Gur, and Mande languages. In addition, some other languages can be considered as peripheral members: Chadic, Atlantic, Ijoid, Dogon and Songhay. Despite the size of this area, the languages of the Macro-Sudan Belt share some features for their AVCs. Indeed, as noticed by Anderson: “tense-marked pronouns or fused subject-auxiliary forms are a salient and noteworthy feature found in this area far more frequently than in other parts of Africa (or the rest of the world)”. Moreover, AUX-headed patterns and Doubled patterns are the most common inflectional patterns.

In sections 13 and 14, Anderson examines AVCs in two lesser-known African Sprachbünde: ‘Sahara’ spread zone and the ‘Nuba Hills’ (better known as Nuba Mountains) residual zone. The Saharan linguistic area encompasses languages belonging to several genetic families. A characteristic feature of this area is the frequent use of AUX-headed AVCs comprising with a light verb (e.g. ‘say’ or ‘do’) and an uninflected lexical verb. Fused AUX-headed formations, especially fused light verb structures, are also common in this area. The last area discussed by Anderson is an “area of extreme linguistic diversity”, with “a modest number of languages (...) belong[ing] to a large number of different families”. There are no AVC features characteristic of the Nuba Mountains languages. However, the author notices that, as in the Ethiopian linguistic area, complex verb forms that derive from a double fusing of auxiliaries are common.

To conclude, this monograph constitutes a great typological study of African languages. Insofar as I know, this volume fills a gap about AVCs in African languages. The panel of languages is large and representative of the overall linguistic diversity of Africa. Moreover, Anderson details his criteria for a “maximal ideal sample” in typological studies. Some few mistakes or imprecisions happen to be found. They have two causes: the fact that some data happen to be third-hand; and misanalyses of some AVCs due to differences between English-speaking and French-speaking traditions. These few mistakes and imprecisions do not significantly impair the value of Anderson’s typology, inescapable as they are in such a large-scale typological work. Besides, Anderson takes account of Amha’s (2010) remarks about the gerund form of the lexical verb within AUX-headed AVCs in Ethiopian languages. Moreover, one could also regret the lack of statistical data, although the appendices allow one to easily find informations about the features of the languages included in the corpus. In my opinion, these informations could profitably be used to make a web database similar to the WALS. Lastly, the discussion of the grammaticalization paths of AVCs is essential for the study of languages which, like most African tongues, have only recent (if any) written attestations.

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