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The conjoint/disjoint alternation in Ndengeleko

CONJOINT/DISJOINT ALTERNATION

❑ Many Bantu languages exhibit alternative verb forms called 'conjoint' and 'disjoint'.

➢ Present tense alternation in Zulu (Buell 2005)

(1)   DJ   Ngi-**ya**-cul-a.   (2)   CJ   Ngi-cul-a   i-ngoma.
        1S.SBJ-**ya**-sing-FV   1S.SBJ-sing-FV   9-9.song
        'I'm singing.'   'I'm singing a song.'

❑ A few defining characteristics emerge from the literature (see Van der Wal 2017 for an overview):

A. *Post verbal focus* always requires the conjoint form.

B. *Clause finality* in matrix clauses requires the disjoint form.

C. *The longer or more marked form* is the disjoint form.

❑ Some analyses out there:

➢ Halpert 2012 for Zulu : The alternation is the realization of a functional head L directly above *v*. The conjoint form **licenses** post verbal material and the disjoint form spells out if the head doesn't find a nominal to license.

➢ Van der Wal 2011 for Makhuwa: The alternation correlates with focus. The conjoint form is used when the post verbal object is **exhaustively focused**.
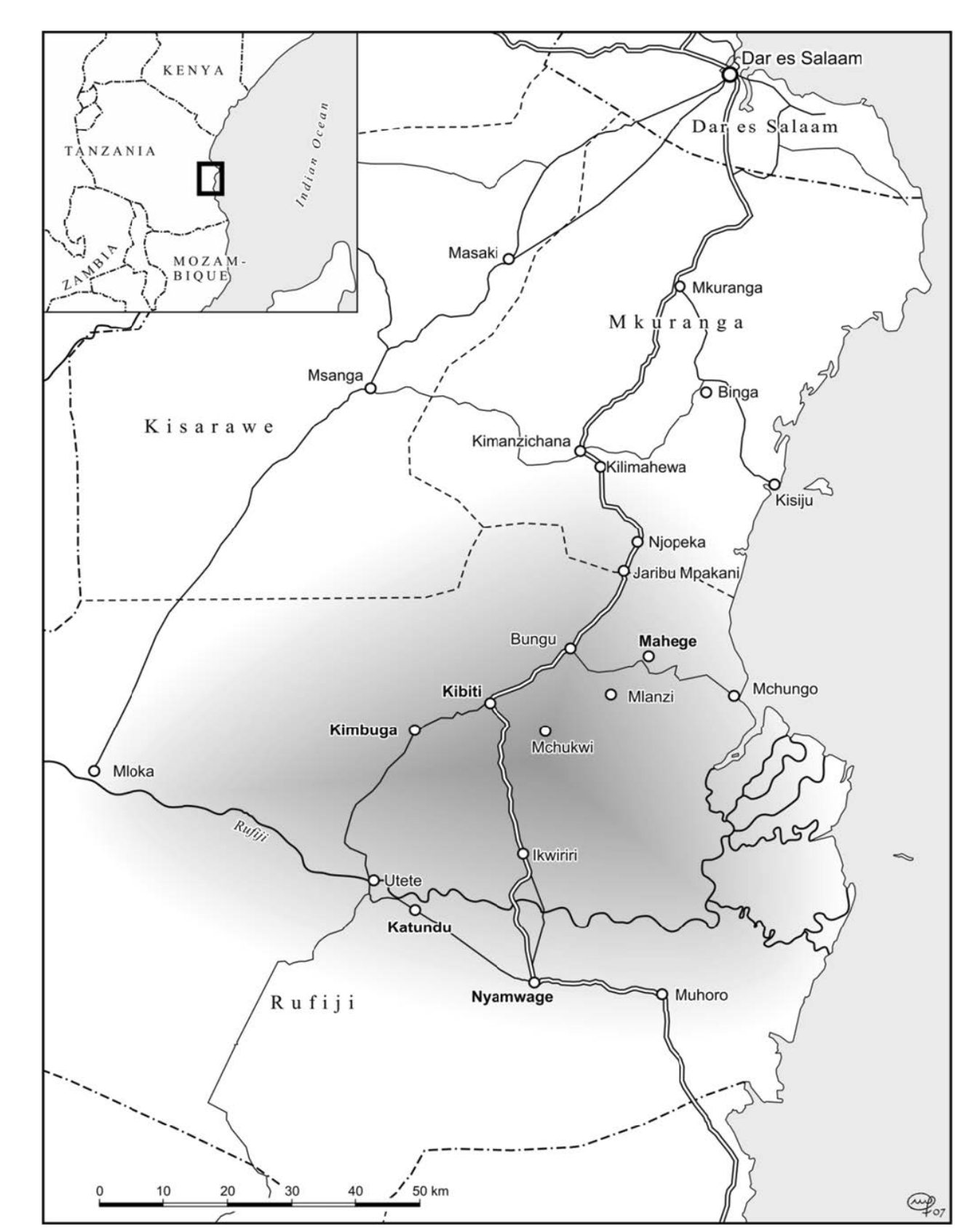
NDENGELEKO

❑ Ndengeleko [ISO: ndg] is an endangered and understudied Bantu language spoken in Tanzania.

❑ Bantu languages are divided into zones (Guthrie 1948). Ndengeleko is P11. Some other languages in the P zone: Makhuwa (P30), Kimatuumbi (P13), Yao (P21/22).

❑ Ndengeleko has the CJ/DJ alternation in four tenses.

Table 1: Conjoint and disjoint forms in the four alternating tenses

Tense/Mood	conjoint	disjoint
Simple present	SM-VB-a	SM-anda-VB-a
Habitual	SM-VB-aa	SM-and-aa-VB-a
Present imperfective	SM-VB-aga	SM-and-aga-VB-a
Past imperfective	SM-VB-age	SM-and-age-VB-a

MY CLAIM

❑ Similar to Makhuwa, **post verbal focus** requires the conjoint form in Ndengeleko.

❑ Yet, like Zulu, it seems like the alternation is associated with **licensing**.

❑ My claim for Ndengeleko: **Focused elements require licensing.**

❑ The conjoint form is the null spell-out of a functional head F when it licenses a focused nominal.

❑ The F head spells out as the disjoint *anda-* when it licenses a focused verb or when the probe on F fails.

Map of the Ndengeleko speaking area from Ström 2013

IMMEDIATELY AFTER VERB (IAV) FOCUS

❑ Default word order in Ndengeleko is S V DO IO.

➢ Context focus

(2)   CJ   [Ba-yɪɪmba]ᵥ   **a-míséembe.**   *Intransitive subject*
             2.S-sing   2-boy
             'BOYS are singing.'

(3)   CJ   [Ni-m-pa-ya]ᵥ   **Nadya**   kilyó.   *Indirect object*
             1SG-1.O-give-APPL   Nadya   food
             'I'm giving NADYA food.'

(4)   CJ   Habiba   [a-teleka]ᵥ   **líino**   mbáa.   *Temporal adverb*
             Habiba   1.S-cook   today   rice
             'Habiba is cooking rice TODAY.'

(5)   CJ   Nadya   [a-yenda]ᵥ   **kándéende.**   *Manner adverb*
             Nadya   1.S-go   slowly.
             'Nadya is walking SLOWLY.'

➢ Inherent focus

(6)   CJ   [A-teleka]ᵥ   **nyaí?**   *Argument wh-word*
             1.S-cook   who
             'Who is cooking?'

(7)   CJ   Halima   [a-a-lenga]ᵥ   **líniki**   ituungu?   *Adjunct wh-word*
             Halima   1.S-FUT-peel   when   onions
             'When will Halima peel onions?'

(8)   CJ   [A-telek-age]ᵥ   **kwáakʊ**   mbáa.   *Negation*
             1.S-cook-PST.IMP NEG   rice
             'She was not cooking rice.'

CONJOINT/DISJOINT DISTRIBUTION

❑ Only the conjoint form is allowed with IAV focus (*DJ in examples 2-8).

❑ The disjoint is used phrase finally.

(9)   DJ   Habiba   a-**andó**-teleka.́   CJ   *Habiba   a-teleka.
             Habiba   1.S-**DJ**-cook   Habiba   1.S-cook
             'Habiba is cooking.'

❑ Disjoint is used with verb focus.

(10)   CJ   N-dya   **ugalɪ**   **bai.**   *IAV focus*
              1SG-eat   ugali   only
              'I eat [only ugali].'

        DJ   **N-ando-lya**   ugalɪ   **bai.**   *Verb focus*
              1SG-DJ-eat   ugali   only
              'I [only eat] ugali.'

❑ Order of morphemes suggests that the disjoint verb is much lower.

CJ morpheme order:	DJ morpheme order:
SUBJ-OBJ-V̄-T/ASP	SUBJ-DJ-T/ASP-OBJ-V̄

❑ Tense and Aspect are suffixes on CJ verbs (suggesting they are in C).

❑ Tense and Aspect are prefixes on DJ verbs (suggesting they are below T).

References: Guthrie 1948. The classification of the Bantu languages. London: Oxford Univ. Press for the International African Inst. ● Halpert 2012. Argument licensing and agreement in Zulu. Doctoral dissertation, MIT. ● Odden 1996. The phonology and morphology of Kimatuumbi. Oxford University Press. ● Ström 2013. The Ndengeleko Language of Tanzania. Doctoral dissertation, University of Gothenburg. ● Van der Wal 2011. Focus excluding alternatives: Conjoint/disjoint marking in Makhuwa. Lingua, 121(11), 1734-1750. ● Van der Wal 2017. What is the conjoint/disjoint alternation? Parameters of crosslinguistic variation. In The conjoint/disjoint alternation in Bantu Van der Wal, J., and Hyman, L. M. (Eds.). Berlin, 14-60.

LICENSING

❑ Evidence for licensing comes from competition for focus.

➢ No multiple wh-questions

(11)   *****Nyaí**   e-líí   **kɪlɪ?**
        who   1.S-eat.PFV   what   Intended: `Who ate what?'

➢ Negative wh-questions require a verbal negation strategy

(12)   **Wanga**-téléka   **nyaí?**
        NEG-cook   who
        'Who isn't cooking?'   Compare to (6) and (8).

❑ Conjoint

Focused objects are [+foc]

F⁰ Agrees with object

Verb raises to C

F⁰ spells out as null

❑ Disjoint

Case 1: verb focus

Focused verbs are [+foc]

F⁰ Agrees with the verb

Position of the verb is frozen

F⁰ moves to C

F⁰ spells out as *anda*

Case 2: clause final

The probe on F⁰ fails

F⁰ moves to C

F⁰ spells out as *anda*

CONCLUSION

❑ The conjoint/disjoint alternation in Ndengeleko reflects the licensing of focused elements.

❑ Building on Halpert 2012, a low functional head Agrees and licenses (for Ndengeleko, it licenses focused nominals and verbs).

❑ F⁰ shows different spell-out and movement behaviour depending on whether it Agrees with a nominal, verb, or fails to Agree.

❑ Conjoint verbs raise to C while disjoint verbs remain low.

➢ The suffix/prefix asymmetry for the conjoint/disjoint alternation is also found in Kimatuumbi (Odden 1992).