**The Continuative Cycle**

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The goal of this paper is to outline the emergence of continuative expressions, both negative and positive, and ultimately highlight a hitherto less discussed cyclical process, which we label the *Continuative Cycle*. Our data come from a stratified sample with world coverage which consists of 120 languages and from several family based samples that include Austronesian, Bantu, Romance, North Germanic and Slavic.

The development of negative continuatives, cf. (van der Auwera 1998), henceforth NOT YET markers from positive ones, henceforth STILL markers, has been traced in a large number of the languages of the world. There are two main scenarios for this evolution. The first one involves using internal negation, e.g.: STILL NOT > NOT YET (Löbner 1989). This pattern is extremely frequent cross-linguistically: as shown in (van Baar 1997: 179; Panova 2021: 44), more than 50% of STILL markers in the negative context acquire the meaning NOT YET. The second scenario is the semantic shift via an implicature ‘STILL doing’ > ‘NOT YET done’, cf. (1). Such a change of meaning has been best-documented for STILL markers in African languages, especially in Bantu (Nurse 2008: 148; Veselinova & Devos 2021). The link between STILL and NOT YET becomes even more intricate if we take into account two less widespread, yet essential patterns. First, STILL markers may be used in the NOT YET function when occurring as a standalone answer to a negative question, cf. Visser (2020: 388) on Kalamang (West Bomberai), cf. (2), Fanego (2021: 342) on Tashelhiyt (Afro-Asiatic). Second, some markers can alternate between STILL and NOT YET senses depending on actional properties of the predicate, cf. the marker *morə̃* in Lamaholot (Austronesian) (Nagaya 2012: 414-416) in (3a) (activity) and (3b) (achievement).

Another important point that has never been explicitly discussed in the literature is that many STILL markers tend to become negative polarity items, in other words, they get stuck in the negative domain. Consequently, they become subject to renewal. Probably, the best known example of such a development is the fate of the adverbs *yet* and *still* in English. In Old English *yet* was a STILL marker but already in Middle English it occurred frequently in negative environments in the NOT YET function; at the same time the adverb *still* ‘quietly’ started to develop its STILL sense (König & Traugott 1982). Similar examples and developments are observed in a variety of languages where synchronically we observe a STILL marker widely used in negative contexts in the NOT YET function but highly restricted in positive contexts. For example, this is the case of the Wayuu (Arawakan) STILL suffix -*yülia*: in positive contexts it is restricted to specific locative phrases, while when combined with negation it is used in all types of clauses (Mansen & Mansen 1984: 535-539).

The study of the propensity of STILL markers to develop into NOT YET markers together with the emergence of new STILL markers is highly relevant for the theory of cyclical processes in language change (van Gelderen 2009), cf. a well-known discussion of the Jespersen’s Cycle (van der Auwera 2009). In the *Continuative Cycle*, an erstwhile expression for STILL develops into a NOT YET expression and a new expression for STILL evolves. Based on the recurrence of this cycle in many unrelated languages, we can then add the continuative as a function that is cross-linguistically and cognitively stable, with its expressions being prone to constant renewal. In other words, it is on a par with other functions that are frequently renewed via cyclical processes.

**Examples**

(1) Makwe [ymk] Bantu, East Bantu, Rufiji-Ruvuma (Devos 2008: 410)

*Méedi ya-ni-púngúuk-a akiíni* ***báado*** *ku-púngúk-íiy-a*

6.water sbj.6-pfv-decrease-fv but **still/not.yet** inf-decrease-exce-fv

‘The tide has gone out but it has not gone out completely yet.’

(2) Kalamang [kgv] West Bomberai (Visser 2020: 388)

1. A: *ka* ***tok*** *sekola* b. A: *ka* ***tok*** *sekola=****nin***

2sg **still** go.to.school 2sg **still** go.to.school=**neg**

‘Do you still go to school?’ ‘Don’t you go to school yet?’

B: ***tok*** B: ***tok***

**still not.yet**

‘Yes [I still go to school].’ ‘Not yet.’

(3) Lamaholot [slp] Austronesian, Central-Eastern Malayo-Polynesian, Bima-Lembata (Nagaya 2012: 414)

a.na həbo **morə̃** b. Ale həkə oto **morə̃**

3sg take.bath **morə̃** Ale stop car **morə̃**

‘She is still taking a bath.’ ‘Ale hasn’t stopped the car yet.’

**Abbreviations**

6 noun class 6

exce excessive

fv final vowel

inf infinitive

neg negation

pfv perfective

sbj subject

sg singular

**References**

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