

### Deproprial and associative plural in the Bambara of Segou region

A depropriial noun is a noun that is derived from a proper name *X* and that has an asserted meaning ‘individual called *X*’ determining its reference (see Van de Velde & Ambouroue 2011). Although in most languages the distinction between a depropriial and a proper name use of a noun is not overtly marked on the noun itself, the two uses tend to have a somewhat different morphosyntax, related to the fact that unlike proper names, depropriial nouns are neither inherently definite nor inherently singular. Thus, only depropriial nouns can have a genuine additive plural, whereas proper names can only have an associative “plural”, viz. ‘*X* and associates’ (cf. Daniel & Moravcsik 2005 on these different kinds of plurality). In languages with associative plural, the associative plural can be expressed by the same marker as the additive plural or by a different, usually dedicated, marker. Thus, in Standard Bambara, a form such as *Ámadi-ù*, where *-ù* is the regular additive plural marker, can mean either ‘several individuals called *Ámadi*’ or ‘*Ámadi* and associates’. In the Bambara of Segou region, a different marker *-ÿ* reserved for proper names and depropriial nouns derived from proper names is found in addition to *-ù*. Depending on the variety, this marker *-ÿ* functions either (i) as associative plural marker with anthroponyms and as an additive plural marker with depropriial derivatives of other kinds of proper names, or (ii) as a dedicated (additive) depropriial plural marker irrespective of the categorial presuppositional meaning (such as ‘person’, ‘place’, etc.) of the noun involved. Typologically, both types of the marker *-ÿ* appear to be rather unusual, if not unique, especially the dedicated depropriial plural marker. The paper provides a detailed description of the uses of the marker *-ÿ* and discusses the implications for delimiting the morphosyntactic category of proper names in Bambara. Finally, the paper offers a diachronic account of this typologically highly unusual pattern.

#### References:

- Van de Velde, Mark & Odette Ambouroue. 2011 (in print). The grammar of Orungu proper names. *Journal of African Languages and Linguistics* 32(1).
- Daniel, Michael & Moravcsik, Edith. 2005. The associative plural. In: Dryer, Matthew S. & Haspelmath, Martin (eds.). *The World Atlas of Language Structures*, 150-153. Oxford: Oxford University Press.