Habituals in four Bantu languages

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Abstract

The paper surveys the expression of habitual meaning and the origins of habitual markers in four Bantu languages: Eton (A.71), Swahili (G.42), Fwe (K.402), and Nyanja/Chewa (N.31). The division of labour between the habitual marker and other tense and aspect markers differs between the languages, but the coexpression of habitual and generic meaning is found in three of them. Swahili and Fwe both testify to a development COP + INF > HAB, but otherwise the habitual markers under scrutiny have different origins. The final section of the paper considers my findings in light of the cross-linguistic literature on habituals.

1 Introduction

This paper investigates the formal and semantic properties of habitual expressions in four Bantu languages: Eton, Swahili, Fwe, and Nyanja. On the basis of existing descriptions of these languages I survey the strategies used to express habitual meaning, which other meanings these markers may express, and what their lexical sources may be. Although a number of earlier cross-linguistic or cross-Bantu studies have included habituals (e.g. Bybee et al. 1994; Nurse 2008), much is still unknown about how this type of marker develops. As habitual markers are widely reported in Bantu languages and the history of the family is well known compared to many other language families, the Bantu family is a good starting point for work on the historical development of habitual markers.

The paper is structured as follows. In section 2 I briefly survey some of the approaches to habitual meaning that can be found in the cross-linguistic literature (section 2.1) and, even more briefly, in the literature on tense and aspect in Bantu (section 2.2). Section 3 outlines the aims of the paper and introduces the four languages and the surveyed literature. In section 4 I present the findings from each of the languages, beginning with Eton (Guthrie zone A) and finishing with Nyanja (zone N). Section 5 discusses the main similarities and differences observed between the languages and suggests some possible directions and questions for future investigations.

2 Background

2.1 Habituals cross-linguistically

The term 'habitual' has been used in grammars at least since the nineteenth century to refer to verbs expressing habitual action. O'Donovan (1845: 151), for instance, distinguishes a 'habitual, or consuetudinal present' in Irish which has 'habitual action' as one of its main uses. In descriptions of English, the term has been in use at least since Onions (1904: 109–111, 136), who uses it to refer to a number of different expressions, including the simple (non-progressive) past and present forms (but, rather surprisingly, apparently not the periphrastic construction with *used to*). The starting point for many later discussions of habituals is Comrie's (1976) influential textbook on aspect. This work will also be my point of departure in this section, which then goes on to introduce the cross-linguistic work of, among others, Dahl (1985), Bybee et al. (1994), and Xrakovskij (1997).

Comrie (1976) divides aspectual meaning into two basic types, perfective and imperfective. The former 'indicates the view of a situation as a single whole', while the latter 'pays essential attention to the internal structure of the situation' (Comrie 1976: 16). The imperfective in turn has a number of subtypes. Stative and progressive meanings describe states and ongoing actions, respectively, and are grouped together as continuous aspect. Another subtype is habitual aspect, which describes a situation as 'characteristic of an extended period of time, so extended in fact that the situation referred to is viewed … as a characteristic feature of a whole period' (Comrie 1976: 27–28). Comrie stresses the distinction between iterative and habitual meanings. A habitual expression may well describe a situation which recurs at more or less regular intervals within a certain period, as in (1a), but it may also describe a state which is characteristic of a given period, as in (1b).

(1) a. *The old professor used always to arrive late.*
b. *The Temple of Diana used to stand at Ephesus.* (Comrie 1976: 28)

In addition to the general characterization of habitual meaning as imperfective, Comrie notes that some languages with a grammatical perfective–imperfective distinction allow habitual uses of the perfective member of the paradigm. In Russian, for instance, a clause with a Perfective verb can easily be made habitual with an adverbial like *každyj raz* 'each time' (Comrie 1976: 31). A sequence of clauses with Perfective verbs may also receive a habitual interpretation in the right context. In the example from Turgenev in (2), cited by Comrie (1976: 70), the verb form *byvalo* 'used to happen, used to be' indicates that a following stretch of discourse takes place habitually in the past. This scene having been set, the Imperfective Present and Perfective non-Past are then used to describe the states and events that would habitually occur:

(2) *Byvalo … sidit i ukradkoj smotrit na Irinu … a ona kak budto serditsja, kak budto skučaet, vstanet, projdëtsja po komnate, xolodno posmotrit na nego … požmët plečom i skrestit ruki*

'It would happen (IPFV) … that he would sit (IPFV) and look (IPFV) stealthily at Irina … and then she would seem to get angry (IPFV), or look bored (IPFV), and

get up (PFV), take a walk (PFV) around the room, give him a cold look (PFV) … shrug (PFV), and fold her arms (PFV)' (Turgenev, *Smoke* (*Dym*), 1867)

Such examples suggest that habituality may pertain to whole series of events and that it may be too limited to view it exclusively as a category of individual verb forms. In the grammatical tradition, however, the term 'habitual' is typically applied only to verbal categories.

Dahl's (1985) cross-linguistic study of tense and aspect systems presents data from sixty-four languages which were investigated using the same translation questionnaire. Based on the consultants' translations Dahl identified which morphemes and constructions recurred in particular contexts. In order for a form to qualify as expressing a 'major TMA category', it had to satisfy two criteria chosen 'operationally, and indeed somewhat arbitrarily' (Dahl 1985: 52): The form should occur at least six times in the questionnaire from the language in question; and it should be attested in 'unmarked' declarative contexts.[1] Dahl identifies three different types of constructions in the sample which he labels habituals: 'true' habituals (HAB), habitual–generics (HABG), and past habituals (HABPAST). An example of the third type would be the English *used to* construction, which is restricted to the past tense. German *pflegen* would be an example of a 'true' habitual, but is too infrequent to qualify as a major aspectual category according to Dahl's criteria. The habitual–generic type is more frequent in the languages where it occurs because it is used in a wider range of contexts, namely habitual as well as generic ones. Generic sentences 'describe the typical or characteristic properties of a species, a kind, or an individual' (Dahl 1985: 99) and have a more 'lawlike' character than habitual ones.[2] All three types—HAB, HABG, and HABPAST—are infrequent in the material, making it difficult to observe any clear cross-linguistic tendencies.

Xrakovskij (1997), in a lengthy introduction to a volume on iteratives and pluractionals, discusses habitual expressions at several points, although there is no independent treatment or a separate section devoted to the phenomenon. In line with the topic of the book, habitual meaning is considered a type of verbal pluractionality, specifically 'a relatively regular repetition of situations' (Xrakovskij 1997: 48). Together with cyclicity (e.g. *every minute* and *annually*) and expressions of intervals (e.g. *often* and *occasionally*), this forms the domain of iterativity. From this it would seem that stative predicates, as in (1b) above, fall outside the domain of habituality, although this is not discussed explicitly. The terminology is also somewhat unclear: 'habitual' is first said to be a subtype of iterative meaning, but later an affix is said to express 'both the iterative and the habitual meanings' (Xrakovskij 1997: 58), suggesting that 'iterative' also has a narrower use which excludes the concept of habituality.

Like Dahl's study, the handbook chapter by Carlson (2012) stresses the connection between habitual and generic expressions, but takes them to be predicated about different types of entities: habitual expressions predicate something about individuals or groups of individuals, generics about 'classes or types' (Carlson 2012: 831). Hence, if

1 Specifically, in 'affirmative, declarative, non-embedded, active constructions' (Dahl 1985: 53), i.e. non-negated and non-passivized declarative main clauses.

2 A prototypical generic sentence would be the answer to the question 'What kind of sound do cats make?' (Dahl 1985: 99).

the definite subject in (3) is taken to refer to a specific lion, the meaning of the predicate is habitual, whereas if the subject is interpreted non-specifically, i.e. as referring to the species, the meaning is generic.

(3) *The lion roars.* (Carlson 2012: 831)

Carlson surveys a number of existing works on the subject and notes that while habituals have been reported in many languages across the world, it is more common for languages to not have dedicated habitual markers. Furthermore, those languages that do 'seem to introduce just one marker of "habituality," and nothing resembling a field of contrasting markers' (Carlson 2012: 842). Habituality would thus appear to be a less central aspectual notion, and there are indications that it may be of a different order than the familiar notions of perfectivity and imperfectivity (if even part of the domain of aspect at all; see Carlson 2012: 831–832). Carlson discusses the occurrence of 'circumstantial' structures in many languages, where habituality pertains to sequences of events rather than individual events, and where a single explicit habitual expression at the beginning of the discourse may suffice. An example of such a structure from Russian was cited above in (2). Carlson points to similar phenomena observed in the literature on English, Kalaallisut, and Hausa.[3]

In their influential cross-linguistic study on the diachrony of TMA categories, Bybee et al. (1994) also investigate the development of habitual marking and its interaction with other categories. Although the authors question some of the details in Comrie's typology of aspect (see Bybee et al. 1994: 137–139), they follow his definition of habituals as expressing a situation characteristic of a particular period of time. Like Dahl (1985) they note the asymmetry between past and present tense, finding that while a number of languages have dedicated past-tense habituals, no language in their sample has a dedicated present-tense habitual marker. Two languages—Kui (Dravidian) and Tucano (Tucanoan)—have present-tense forms with habitual meaning without a corresponding past-tense form, but in both cases a periphrastic present is argued to have developed recently and taken over part of the original meaning of the simple present, which is then predominantly used for habitual meaning. In other words, Bybee et al. find no grammaticalization 'pathways' leading specifically to present-tense habitual markers. They suggest a pragmatic reason for this. Speakers are more likely to use explicit habitual (and progressive) expressions when talking about the past because the default reading of past-tense forms tends to be perfective:

> while present tense principally tells of the way things are, the past tense principally narrates what happened. In order to explicitly talk about habitual or ongoing situations in the past, one needs to add extra elements into one's utterance, hence the grammaticization of past habitual and progressive. (Bybee et al. 1994: 153)

Bybee et al. also investigate the lexical sources of habitual expressions, but in most cases they are not able to identify these. Among the source lexemes they do identify

3 Although he fails to mention that the phenomenon in Hausa is not limited to habitual expressions, but reflects a general tendency towards 'TAM deletion' in coordinated clauses (Newman 2000: 140). Newman mentions it for the future, potential, and continuous TAM forms as well.

are verbs meaning 'live', 'sit', 'know', and 'see'. The last two may be part of the same pathway, as 'see' predicates frequently develop the meaning 'know' (Bybee et al. 1994: 154).

Kuteva et al. (2019), an updated and much enlarged version of Heine & Kuteva (2002), is also a cross-linguistic survey, but in the form of a 'lexicon' of pathways of grammaticalization. In the index of target forms ('grams'), habituals are mentioned six times. However, a closer look at the individual articles reveals that some of these may be reducible to a more common development PROGRESSIVE > HABITUAL. For the source lexemes GO (Kuteva et al. 2019: 208–209), LIVE (p.261), and SIT (pp. 405–406) this appears to be the case. For the source lexeme KNOW it is suggested that ABILITY may be a step towards habitual meaning, but it is not clear whether the authors consider this step necessary (pp. 248–249). The source lexemes REMAIN (p.368) and USE (p.450) do not seem to have any intermediate meanings on their way to habitual meaning. Finally, the authors note that the development ITERATIVE > HABITUAL has been suggested for several languages, but that 'diachronic data are urgently needed' (p.245) to confirm whether habitual meanings always develop out of iterative ones or the reverse development also occurs.

2.2 Tense, aspect, and habituals in Bantu

The verbal systems of the Bantu languages have been the object of several specialist studies, both contrastive and historical-comparative, such as Güldemann (1996), Nurse (2008), parts of Meeussen (1967) and Welmers (1973), and several contributions to Voeltz (2005).[4] The Bantu language family in general is characterized by an agglutinating verbal morphology with affixes expressing tense, aspect, valency, person, and other categories. The markers for subject, object, tense, and aspect are commonly prefixed to the verbal root, and valency-changing 'extensions' are usually suffixed to it. In many languages the default final vowel (FV), typically *-a*, has no content of its own, but changing it may be used to express, among other things, negative and modal meaning. To illustrate the agglutinating structure, a Fwe example is given in (4). Here a subject (1SG), tense (PST), and object marker (noun class 1) precede the root, and an applicative marker and a final vowel follow. The final vowel *-i* expresses near-past perfective meaning.

(4) *ndi-a-mu-ká:n-in-i*
1SG-PST-I-refuse-APPL-NPST.PFV
'I've refused on his behalf.' (Gunnink 2018: 224)

Many Bantu languages also incorporate other elements into the chain of verbal affixes. The Swahili verb, for instance, has a relativizer slot before the object prefix, as illustrated in (5).

(5) *kila m-tu hu-fany-a a-na-l.o-li-tak-a*
every I-person HAB-do-FV I-PROG-5.REL-5.OBJ-want-FV
'every man does what he likes [lit. 'that which he wants']' (Text, ex. 23)

4 Unfortunately, I was not able to consult Guthrie (1967–1971) for this paper.

Nurse (2008) is a large comparative study of tense and aspect in Bantu, based on data from more than 200 languages; for statistical statements a smaller sample of 100 languages was used. A number of overview articles based wholly or partly on the same material have also been published (e.g. Nurse & Philippson 2006; Nurse 2016). The questionnaires used for the study are published in Nurse (2019). Nurse finds that some markers occur widely across the whole family, whereas others are local innovations found only in a single or a few closely related languages. Among the most common TMA markers across Bantu are the past-tense markers *a-* and *-ile* (Nurse 2008: 82), the subjunctive marker *-e* (p.261), and a 'locative' progressive construction of the type COP + 'at' + verbal noun (p.249).

Dedicated habitual markers are less common in Nurse's sample, occurring in just under half of the surveyed languages. The most frequent individual morpheme is the suffix **-a(n)g*, which in some languages has habitual, in other languages a more general imperfective meaning. Beside **-a(n)g*, Nurse finds that reflexes of Proto-Bantu **yikad* 'be, live, remain, sit' are used as habituals in a number of languages in different regions, suggesting parallel but independent developments (Nurse 2008: 292). This, however, is much rarer than **-a(n)g*.

Nurse observes that tense contrasts are often reduced in habitual constructions. Languages with a remoteness distinction in the past often have only one past habitual, and languages with a dedicated future tense do not necessarily also have a future habitual (Nurse 2008: 144). Nurse's explanation for these gaps is functional–pragmatic: habits are not often talked about in the future, and they tend to develop over longer periods of time, meaning that remoteness distinctions are less likely to be relevant.

Beside Nurse I have found no other cross-Bantu studies devoted to habitual markers. This is perhaps unsurprising, as dedicated habituals tend to be less frequent across languages than some other aspectual markers. Furthermore, when a dedicated habitual does occur in a language, it is often a relatively marginal phenomenon (see Dahl's findings discussed above). On the other hand, habituals seem to be more widespread in Bantu than in many other language families. Almost half of the languages in Nurse's sample have a dedicated habitual marker, an unexpectedly high number in view of Dahl's findings.[5] This, I believe, makes Bantu an excellent starting point for work on habituals more generally.

3 Methods and material

3.1 Aims of the investigation

The paper surveys the habitual markers of four Bantu languages where such markers have been reported. For each of the four languages, I will attempt to answer three questions: Which strategies are used to express habitual meaning in the language? Which other meanings may these markers or constructions express? And what, if

5 Some caution is warranted here, of course, as Nurse and Dahl do not use the same criteria to determine whether a category 'habitual' exists in a language. For Nurse it suffices that a dedicated marker exists. In Dahl's approach a certain frequency in the material is required.

anything, can be said about the origins of the habitual markers?[6] As I rely on existing grammars and descriptions, the identification of markers expressing the meaning 'habitual' is necessarily somewhat opportunistic—the crucial criterion for inclusion was that a category labelled 'habitual' had been mentioned in one or more descriptions of the language, but the linguists working on the languages may of course have used different criteria to identify this category. As a guiding principle I will use Comrie's (1976: 28) definition of a habitual as 'a characteristic feature of a whole period' to determine whether the marker indeed expresses habitual meaning. As it soon became clear that most sources only give examples of habitual expressions in 'unmarked' declarative contexts (cf. footnote 1), I decided to limit myself to these. I will thus not attempt to make any generalizations about the use of habitual markers in interrogative or negative contexts.

In order to get a geographically diverse sample, I chose languages from four different Guthrie zones. I included two more and two less well-known languages. Swahili and Nyanja are widely spoken and (comparatively) well described. For both of these, grammars and specialized studies of their verbal systems are available. The other two, Eton and Fwe, have only recently been described in any detail, and the data from these languages are thus more limited in scope than those from Swahili and Nyanja. Needless to say, they also depend on the analyses of a smaller number of linguists, namely the authors of the two descriptive grammars. This limitation should of course be kept in mind in the following.

3.2 The languages studied

The languages included are listed in Table 1 along with their Guthrie zones (following Maho 2009), ISO codes, and the main sources I consulted. For Swahili and Nyanja only the most important references are listed; other reference works, grammar sketches, etc. will be mentioned where relevant. The remainder of this section will provide background information on the four languages and the sources used for the investigation.

Table 1: Languages surveyed

Language	Guthrie	ISO	Main source(s)
Eton	A.71	eto	Van de Velde 2008
Swahili	G.42	swh	Polomé 1967; Beaudoin-Lietz 1999
Fwe	K.402	fwe	Gunnink 2018
Nyanja (Chewa)	N.31	nya	Kiso 2012

Eton (A.71) is spoken in central Cameroon, in an area just north of Yaoundé. A significant number of speakers also live in the capital itself, though it is unknown how many. The total number of speakers is also unknown, but may run upward of 400,000 (Van de Velde 2008: 2). Eton forms part of a cluster with a number of neighbouring languages ('Beti–Bulu–Fang'), with which there is a degree of mutual intelligibility.

6 These questions are inspired by a suggested questionnaire for habituals presented by Hengeveld (2020). However, my three questions are a much reduced version of this.

Most prominent of these is Ewondo, the language native to Yaoundé, for which a number of grammatical descriptions exist, dating back to *c.*1900 (e.g. Haarpaintner 1909; Redden 1979). The only comprehensive grammatical description of Eton is the dissertation by Van de Velde (2006), later published as Van de Velde (2008). The published version includes two glossed texts. The dissertation includes an Eton–French dictionary. In addition to these works, I consulted an earlier description of Ewondo (Redden 1979) in order to see if any comparative evidence on the habitual expressions could be found.

Swahili is probably the best known Bantu language, so the introduction here will be very brief. Swahili 'proper' (G.42) was originally spoken on Zanzibar and along the coast of present-day Kenya and mainland Tanzania, but since the nineteenth century it has spread inward and is now spoken across a large area in East and Central Africa by 'some 15 million L1 speakers and at least 50 million L2 speakers' (Hammarström 2018: 32). A number of related varieties, included under the Guthrie codes G.41 and G.43, are usually considered Swahili dialects. Comorian (G.44) is sometimes considered a dialect of Swahili as well. Because of the sociolinguistic position of Swahili, several descriptions and specialized studies are available, although there are significant differences between the various dialects in terms of descriptive coverage. For purely practical reasons, I will limit myself to standard East Coast Swahili in this survey. Beaudoin-Lietz (1999) discusses the Swahili Habitual at some length, but I will also refer to other resources, such as Polomé (1967) and Ashton (1944). Some examples will be drawn from my glossed text.

Fwe (K.402) is spoken in southwestern Zambia and northeastern Namibia, in an area running across the border along the Kwando river. While the total number of speakers is unknown, there may be around 20,000 native speakers (Gunnink 2018: 3–4). However, the area where Fwe is spoken is very linguistically diverse, and according to Gunnink (2018: 3) virtually all speakers of Fwe are fluent in one or more other languages. In Zambia, most Fwe speakers also speak Lozi, whereas in Namibia English has become the language of wider communication. Historically there has been contact both with several other Bantu languages as well as the Khoisan languages Khwe and Ju (Gunnink 2018: Ch. 17). The dissertation by Gunnink is the only available description of Fwe. It is based on fieldwork carried out on both sides of the Zambian–Namibian border over a period of seven months (for details see Gunnink 2018: 8).

Nyanja (N.31), also known as Chewa or Chichewa, is the most widely used language of Malawi. It is also spoken in parts of Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique. Mchombo (2004: 1) estimates that there are about six million fluent speakers. A number of early descriptions exist, such as Riddel (1880), Hetherwick (1907), and the dissertation by Watkins (1937). More recent work include several papers and book chapters on various aspects of grammar and phonology (e.g. Bresnan & Mchombo 1987; Dubinsky & Simango 1996; Hyman & Mtenje 1999; Mchombo 2001; Downing 2018) and the syntactic sketch by Mchombo (2004). On the verbal system specifically, there is the dissertation by Kiso (2012), which is a comparative study of tense and aspect in Nyanja, Tumbuka, and Sena, based on fieldwork carried out at different locations in Malawi. The dissertation includes a comprehensive survey of earlier works and their treatment of the tense–aspect system. As Kiso (2012) is both the most recent and the most comprehensive resource on tense and aspect in Nyanja, it will be my primary

source for the survey.

4 Findings

This section lays out the findings from the four languages. They are presented in the same order as they were introduced in the preceding section, begining with Eton and ending with Nyanja.

4.1 Habitual auxiliaries in Eton

Van de Velde (2006; 2008) describes the tense and aspect system of Eton as consisting of 'basic' forms—prefixes and auxiliaries—and 'optional' forms, which he terms 'quasi-auxiliaries'. The basic forms are used to make a number of tense distinctions, as shown in Table 2 (based on Van de Velde 2008: Ch. 7). In the three past-tense categories a distinction is made between perfective and imperfective aspect. The 'Indefinite Future' is rare and its exact meaning is uncertain (Van de Velde 2008: 261–263).[7]

Table 2: Basic tense in Eton

Past	Remote Past (RPST)
	Hesternal Past (Y-)
	Hodiernal Past (T-)
Non-past	Present (PRS)
	Future (FUT)
	Indefinite Future (IF)

In addition to the basic tense and aspect forms, Eton has a large number of optional 'quasi-auxiliaries' which are used to express various 'aspectual, manner-adverbial and modal notions' (Van de Velde 2008: 331). These include habitual, repetitive, andative ('go'), and persistive meanings. There are two such quasi-auxiliaries with habitual meaning, *dìŋ* and *zə̀zà*. The former is also used as a lexical verb with the meaning 'love, like', whereas the latter apparently only occurs in habitual expressions. Because of the polysemy of *dìŋ* it is possible to construct ambiguous examples such as (6).[8]

(6) *à-ŋgá-bɛ́* *L-dìŋ-Lgì* *mà* *L-kùz* *H* *bì-págì*
I-RPST-IPFV INF-like/HAB-G 1SG.NPPR INF-buy LT 8-present
'He liked to buy me presents.'
or: 'He often bought me presents.' (Van de Velde 2008: 356)

7 Beside the categories in Table 2, there are also several relative tenses and a separate subsystem of resultatives, which I leave out for the sake of simplicity. Van de Velde gives both the surface form and a morphological analysis of all Eton examples. I reproduce only the analyzed versions in the following, with the obvious caveat that these depend wholly on Van de Velde's phonological analysis. Eton has tonal affixes, rendered as L (low) and H (high) in the examples. The morpheme glossed LT ('link tone') appears after infinitives in certain contexts; its function is unclear (Van de Velde 2008: 206).

8 I assume that the example was constructed during elicitation, but it may also have occurred in spontaneous discourse. Unfortunately Van de Velde does not consistently provide information on the sources of the examples.

However, as shown in other examples, such as the one with the predicate 'cough' in (8) below, the meaning 'like' is often ruled out or at least pragmatically unlikely.

Habitual marking in Eton is not obligatory—hence Van de Velde's classification of *dìŋ* and *zàzà* as quasi-auxiliaries. An imperfective predicate may receive a habitual interpretation in some contexts and a progressive one in others, as shown in (7a). The addition of *dìŋ*, as in (7b), results in an 'unambiguously habitual formulation' (Van de Velde 2008: 238).

(7) a. *mà-ŋgá-bé* *L-lòd-Lgì* *vā́*
1SG-RPST-IPFV INF-pass-G here
'I used to pass here.'
or: 'I was passing by here.'

b. *mà-ŋgá-bé* *L-dìŋ-Lgì* *L-lòd* *H* *vā́*
1SG-RPST-IPFV INF-HAB-G INF-pass LT here
'I used to pass here.' (Van de Velde 2008: 238)

The quasi-auxiliary *dìŋ* is also used to express iterative meaning, i.e. repetition rather than habit, as shown in (8), where it combines with a Hesternal Past Imperfective form (glossed YIPFV).

(8) *à-mɛ́* *L-dìŋ-gì* *L-kɔ́zì*
I-YIPFV INF-HAB-G INF-cough
[Why did you think yesterday that your brother had caught a cold?]
'He coughed often.' (Van de Velde 2008: 332)

In addition to *dìŋ*, the habitual quasi-auxiliary *zàzà* is found. Van de Velde gives the example in (9):

(9) *à-Ltɛ́* *L-zàzà* *àjă* *H* *à jám* *H* *kpɛ́m*
I-PRS INF-HAB already LT ? cook LT 9.cassava
'She has the habit of regularly preparing cassava leaves.'
(Van de Velde 2008: 333)

On the basis of the admittedly scarce data, the form *zàzà* appears to be marginal. The example in (9) is, as far as I can tell, the only occurrence of the auxiliary in the entire grammar. Van de Velde (2008: 333) also notes that the morpheme *à* preceding the main verb in (9) is obscure but that the construction 'might be a nominalization'. For more than one reason the auxiliary *zàzà* is thus in need of further documentation.

Redden (1979: 119–120) records the cognate of *dìŋ* in Ewondo, but only with the meaning 'love, like', e.g. in *diŋdí* 'like to eat'. The verb is found with the same or a similar meaning in other Bantu languages and is reconstructed as **dàng* (BLR 8650) by Bastin et al. (2002), though the database does not record it for Guthrie zone A. There does not appear to be a cognate of *zàzà* with habitual meaning in Ewondo. At least, Redden mentions no form similar to the Eton one.[9] There is a habitual marker

9 Admittedly, the list of forms provided by Redden is very short. Perhaps *zàzà* might be related to the widely recorded stem **jíjɪ* 'know' (BLR 6208). The change 'know' > HAB has parallels elsewhere (see section 2.1 above), and Proto-Bantu (PB) **j* > Eton *z* appears to be a regular sound change, cf. PB **jògù* 'elephant' (BLR 1607) and Eton *zwàg* id.; PB **jàmbé* 'God' (BLR 3196) and Eton *zàmá* id.

kad-, as in (10), which might be related to the form **yikad* discussed by Nurse (2008) (see section 2.2 above).

(10) *bi-á-kad-dí*
1PL-PRS-HAB-eat
'we usually eat' (Redden 1979: 122)

The evidence thus suggests that Eton has developed the habitual–iterative quasi-auxiliary *dìŋ* from a verb meaning 'love, like', whereas little can be said about the etymology of habitual *zə̀zà*, except that it might be related to a Proto-Bantu root with the meaning 'know' (see footnote 9). The semantic difference between *dìŋ* and *zə̀zà* also remains unclear.

4.2 Habitual *hu-* in Swahili

As mentioned in section 3.2, Swahili is probably the best known Bantu language, and numerous resources are available from the mid-nineteenth century onward. The existence of a habitual prefix *hu-* is widely reported in these. Büttner (1890) describes *hu* (q.v.) as a 'Verbalpraefix für alle Klassen zur Bezeichnung einer gewohnten Thätigkeit' and gives the example *hunena* 'er pflegte zu sagen' (oddly, with a past-tense verb in the German translation). Burt (1910: 84) terms the form with *hu-* the '"always" tense' and notes that it has no separate person forms: *hufunga* may mean 'I always fast', 'we always fast', and so on. Similar descriptions are given by Madan (1903: 102), Sacleux (1939: 287), Perrott (1951: 56), Brauner & Bantu (1964: 47–48), and Polomé (1967: 118). Polomé describes the form as 'non-paradigmatical' because it cannot occur with a 'subject-prefix', i.e. class or person marker.

Many of the examples of Habitual *hu-* given in the literature have a proverbial or aphoristic character, as in Polomé's example in (11a). Ashton (1944: 38–39) in fact simply cites a number of aphorisms to illustrate the 'HU- tense' (e.g. *haba na haba hujaza kibaba* 'many a mickle makes a muckle'). However, as the example from my text in (11b) shows, this use is not limited to proverbs and aphorisms, but is also employed productively to express general truths.

(11) a. *u-gomvi hu-let-a ma-tata*
11-quarrel HAB-bring-FV 6-trouble
'quarreling brings trouble' (Polomé 1967: 112)

b. *Kweli m-tu a-ki-w-a katika safari hu-ji-funz-a*
truly 1-person 1-BACKGR-COP-FV in 9.journey HAB-REFL-learn.CAUS-FV
m-engi, na m-tu hu-ingi-a akili ny-ingi
6-much with 1-person HAB-enter-FV 9.thought 9-much
'Truly when a person is on a journey he learns many things, and he increases his knowledge.' (Text, ex. 5)

The examples in (11) would probably be classified as generics following Dahl's and Carlson's criteria (see section 2.1 above). However, the more 'canonical' habitual use, where a propensity or habit is described, occurs frequently as well, as in (12):

(12) *Lakini U-rusi hu-sheheni kila pahali na ku-tem-a ma-te*
but 14-Russian HAB-load.cargo every 9.place with 15-spit-FV 6-saliva
katika gari
in 5.carriage
'But in Russia they take on loads at every place and they spit in the compartment' (Text, ex. 28)

A more recent—and more detailed—description of *hu-* is given by Beaudoin-Lietz (1999: 118–124, 158–162) in her dissertation on TMA and negation in contemporary standard Swahili. Her data were gathered both from reference grammars and native-speaker consultants, but no structured questionnaire was used. She describes the Habitual with *hu-* as representing 'an extended period which is not restricted to the past or future' (Beaudoin-Lietz 1999: 121), i.e. a general or recurring state of affairs. Unlike the English *used to* construction, the Swahili Habitual according to this description cannot be used to refer to recurring situations in the past which do not hold anymore. Interestingly, however, in one of the examples in my text *hu-* seems to be used in exactly such a context. In the example in (13) the narrator is clearly referring to a recurring situation in the past.

(13) *Hu-fung-w-a katika mi-nyororo ku-fanz-a kazi y-a ma-isha.*
HAB-bind-PASS-FV in 4-chain 15-do.CAUS-FV 9.work 9-CONN 6-life
'They [the Russian peasants] were imprisoned in chains to do (hard) labour for life.' (Text, ex. 20)

I have not found any indications about whether this might reflect regional variation or diachronic change. In general, information about past-tense habituals in the literature is scant, but both Polomé (1967: 149–150) and Ashton (1944: 249–250, 257) seem to indicate that this is expressed periphrastically with a past-tense form of the auxiliary *kuwa*, as in (14) with *alikuwa* and *lililokuwa*.

(14) a. *m-toto a-li-ku-w-a a-ki-chez-a m-lango-ni*
I-child I-PST-15-COP-FV I-BACKGR-play-FV III-door-LOC
'the child used to play at the door' (Polomé 1967: 150)

b. *Ku-li-ku-w-a na joka kuu, li-li-l.o-ku-w-a*
15-PST-15-COP-FV CONN 5.snake 5.great 5-PST-5.REL-15-COP-FV
li-ki-shuk-a m-ji-ni kila siku
5-BACKGR-descend-FV III-town-LOC every 9.day
'There was once a huge snake, who used to go down to the town every day.' (Ashton 1944: 250)

There is general agreement in the literature that Habitual *hu-* derives historically from a periphrastic construction *-ni ku-* (COP INF). This is mentioned by Burt (1910: 84), Sacleux (1939: 287), and Polomé (1967: 118, n.88). Nurse & Hinnebusch (1993: 414), with reference to various Sabaki varieties showing intermediate forms, reconstruct the development as shown in (15):

(15) /ni+ku/ > nku > η̥k^hu > k^hu > hu

They also write, however, that "Care has to be taken in interpreting this phenomenon" (Nurse & Hinnebusch 1993: 414), though this warning may pertain more to the various dialectal forms than to the etymology itself. Assuming that the etymology is correct, we will see in the next section that Swahili *hu-* has a close parallel in one of the habitual expressions in Fwe.

4.3 Habitual affixes in Fwe

The TMA system in Fwe is described in detail by Gunnink (2018), in particular how the varous formal means—affixes, auxiliaries, and melodic tone patterns—interact. Gunnink treats as basic those TMA categories which cannot be combined with each other, given here in Table 3. Of these six categories, the Remote Past, Near Past, and Subjunctive have separate Perfective and Imperfective forms.[10]

Table 3: Basic TMA categories in Fwe

Past	Remote Past (RPST)
	Near Past (NPST)
	Present (PRS)
	Remote Future (RFUT)
	Habitual 2 (HAB2)
	Subjunctive (SBJV)

In addition to the categories in 3 a number of 'non-basic' TMA categories exist, which may combine with some of the basic ones. These are the Inceptive, Near Future, Persistive, Habitual 1, Stative, and Progressive constructions. Habitual 1 may combine with at least the Present, the Remote Past Imperfective, and the Subjunctive (see below for examples).

The Fwe Present construction allows progressive, future, modal, and 'habitual or generic/gnomic' interpretations. Gunnink (2018: 293–294) gives 'I am running', 'I will run', and 'I run' as possible translations of the present-tense form *ndìbùtúkà*. An example of the modal use is *ndìbónà* 'I can see' (Gunnink 2018: 299). Gunnink discusses the various uses of the Present in detail, but her main focus are the differences between the Present and the functionally partly overlapping Remote Future and Progressive constructions. From the examples of the 'generic/gnomic' use of the Present, two of which are given in (16), it seems that these are indeed more like generics than habituals in the sense discussed in section 2.1.

(16) a. *e-cí-kwáme ci-á=mári* *ci-énd-a mbó-mu-ézi*
AUG-7-man 7-CONN=polygamy 7-go-FV ADV-3-moon
'A polygamous man walks like the moon.' (proverb)

10 In Zambian Fwe the Remote Past Imperfective is used for both remote and near past reference. In other words, the dialect has no dedicated Near Past Imperfective construction. This distinction thus only pertains to Namibian Fwe (Gunnink 2018: 322).

b. *ba-kéntu ba-zwát-a zi-kocí*
II-woman II-wear-FV 8-skirt
'Women wear skirts.' (Gunnink 2018: 301)

However, there seems to be at least some overlap between the 'generic' Present and the Habitual 2. The example with the HAB2 marker *náku-* in (17) is later repeated in the Present tense, i.e. without any overt Habitual marker (Gunnink 2018: 368).[11]

(17) *zi-náku-tíiz-a*
8-HAB2-be_dangerous-FV
'They are dangerous.' (Gunnink 2018: 356)

Habitual meaning in the past may be expressed by the Remote Past Imperfective alone (see [18a]) or, apparently more frequently, by the RPST.IPFV combined with the HAB1 suffix *-ang*, as in (16b), an example from a narrative text.

(18) a. *ka-ndí-zyímb-a*
RPST.IPFV-1SG-sing-FV
'I used to sing/be a singer.'
b. *ka-á-ri$_H$-zo:r-áng-a o-Ø-ndavú ku-i-a kú-ku-cá:n-a*
RPST.IPFV-I-REFL-turn-HAB1-FV AUG-Ia-lion INF-go-FV 17-INF-hunt-FV
'He used to turn himself into a lion to go hunt.' (Gunnink 2018: 324–325)

As mentioned above, the Habitual 2 marker *náku-* is described as a 'basic' TMA category because it does not cooccur with any of the other categories in Table 3. According to this description, Habitual 2 is thus excluded from past-tense and subjunctive contexts, unlike Habitual 1 (as seen in [18b]). However, in another study Gunnink (2017) quotes the example in (19), where a Past Imperfective form is combined with both the HAB2 prefix and the HAB1 suffix.[12]

(19) *kà-tù-nákù-zí-βìk-àng-à=kò*
RPST.IPFV-1PL-HAB2-8.OBJ-put-HAB1-FV=17.LOC
'We used to put them there.' (Gunnink 2017: 122)

Apart from the (uncertain) restrictions of the Habitual 2, Gunnink finds no clear difference between the two constructions. In fact, they are often combined, as illustrated by (19), (20), and several other examples in the grammar.

(20) *ha-hená ndi-náku-bú:k-ang-a iyé N-ma-shene N-ma-shene*
EMPH-16.DEM 1SG-HAB2-wake-HAB1-FV COMP COP-6-worm COP-6-worm
'Every time I wake up and say: there are worms, there are worms.'
(Gunnink 2018: 357)

11 The example is given without any further context, but the subject is of noun class 8, the plural of noun class 7, which includes terms for diseases, dangerous and poisonous animals, and undesirable humans (Gunnink 2018: 121–122). The verb *tíiz* 'be dangerous' is glossed 'be_busy' in the example on p.368, but it is clear from the surrounding text and an earlier example (p.300) that this is a typo.

12 The example in (19) is from a paper on locative clitics, which uses a slightly different transcription system for the Fwe examples. The data for the study are said to be from both Zambian and Namibian Fwe (Gunnink 2017: 120), but it is not clear where (19) was recorded.

Some consultants considered the forms with both HAB2 *náku-* and HAB1 *-ang* to focus more on the repetition and those with only *-ang* to focus on the situation as characteristic of the subject referent (Gunnink 2018: 356, n.36). In the same footnote Gunnink also suggests that the forms with *náku-* may be 'more progressive-like' than those with *-ang*, though it is unclear to me exactly what this means. The semantic and distributional differences between the two Habituals are thus in need of further research.

Regarding the origins of the two affixes there is more certainty. The Habitual 1 suffix *-ang* is found across the Bantu family, as discussed in section 2.2 above. According to Meeussen (1967: 110), 'its meaning, ranging from "imperfective" to "repetitive" or "habitual", is difficult to state more exactly for the proto-period', but that it is reconstructable for Proto-Bantu seems to be certain enough. The Habitual 2 prefix *náku-* has an etymology comparable to Swahili *hu-*. It derives from *iná* 'be (at)' plus an infinitive with the prefix *ku-*. According to Gunnink, *náku-* still shows traces of its origin. If the prefix is followed by the distal marker *ka-*, *ku* may disappear, as shown in the elicited example in (21). The same deletion happens with infinitival *ku* (Gunnink 2018: 393–394).

(21) *a-ná*(*ku*)*-ka-tongauk-a*
I-HAB2-DIST-complain-FV
'She always complains there.' (Gunnink 2018: 352)

The origins of the two Fwe Habitual affixes are thus relatively certain, one because it is widespread across Bantu, the other because it is a more recent development with a transparent etymology.

4.4 Present and future habituals in Nyanja

The description of the Nyanja tense and aspect system in Kiso (2012) is based on fieldwork carried out at several locations in Malawi. A degree of variation in the data was thus to be expected, also in light of the diverging claims in the earlier literature. Kiso (2012: 81) notes that the geographic variation is primarily in the expressions of past and future tense, whereas the present-tense forms are relatively stable across the surveyed dialects.

Table 4: Tense and aspect prefixes in Nyanja

Past	Hodiernal PST/PRF	*a-*
	Recent Past	*na-*
	Remote Past	*da-*
	PST.IPFV	ma_2-/*nka-*
Non-past	PRS.PROG	*ku-*
	PRS.HAB	ma_1-
	'Extended' PRS	ø-marking
	Hodiernal Future	*zi-*
	Remote Future (RFUT)	*dza-*
	FUT.HAB	*zika-*/*zidza-*

Tense and aspect in Nyanja appears to be encoded almost exclusively by verbal prefixes, although some periphrastic forms are also attested. For instance, the Present Progressive marker *ku-* is also found in its older periphrastic form *-li ku-* (COP INF) among elderly speakers. A simplied overview of the prefixes are given in Table 4, based on Kiso (2012: 81). Because most of the categories are expressed by a single morpheme I also give these, although not all dialectal variants are shown in the table.[13]

As Table 4 shows, Kiso finds two separate Habituals in Nyanja, Present and Future. In spite of appearances, PRS.HAB *ma*$_1$- and PST.IPFV *ma*$_2$- are distinct in most dialects. While segmentally identical, the forms are distinguished by different tonal contours, although there appears to be significant variation in the realization of these, and some dialects may not mark the distinction consistently (Kiso 2012: 95–97).

The Present Habitual is used for both habitual expressions in the narrow sense, as in (22a), and generic expressions like (22b). Both examples in (22) are answers to prompts from Dahl's questionnaire.[14]

(22) a. *A-má-lemb-a* *kalata.*
I-PRS.HAB-write-FV IA.letter
(What does your brother usually do after breakfast?) 'He writes a letter.'

b. *A-má-lir-a* *miyawu~miyawu.*
I-PRS.HAB-cry-FV meow~meow
(What kind of sound do cats make?) 'They meow.' (Kiso 2012: 96)

A number of early descriptions, such as Henry (1891) and Watkins (1937), do not mention the Present Habitual, as shown in Kiso's overview (Kiso 2012: 88). All the most recent studies and textbooks she surveys do mention it, but not all of these mention the PST.IPFV form *ma*$_2$- (Kiso 2012: 102). Some of this variation is likely due to diachronic or geographical differences between the described varieties, but perhaps the distinction between the *ma*$_1$- and *ma*$_2$- may also have been overlooked because of the near-identity of the forms. This may be the case in Mapanje's (1983) dissertation, where *ma-* is described as a present-tense habitual marker, but where it is later mentioned that the 'so-called habitual marker' may also express recent past. Mapanje (1983) gives the example in (23) to illustrate this use.

(23) *tì-mà-thámáng-á* *m-jàhò pósàchédwà'pà*
1PL-PST.IPFV(?)-run-FV 9-race just_now
'we were running a race just now' (Mapanje 1983: 122)

Kiso finds two forms which she characterizes as past imperfective, *ma*$_2$- and *nka-*. One of the investigated dialects (Lilongwe-town) uses only the former, two dialects

13 Kiso also distinguishes a zero-marked 'near future', but it seems clear enough from the description that this form is identical to the 'extended present', and co-expression of present and near-future meaning is cross-linguistically well attested. It thus seems more economical to me to regard this as one form with contextually dependent semantics.

14 Interlinear glosses tentatively added in the following with the help of Mchombo (2001; 2004) and Paas (2018). The grammatical glossing in Kiso (2012) is rather coarse-grained. Mapanje (1983) provides no interlinear glosses at all.

(Dowa and Kasiya) use only the latter, and three dialects (Blantyre-Zomba, Lilongwe-rural, and Mchinji) use both. The distinction in the last three dialects appears to be one of remoteness: *ma*$_2$- is primarily used for more recent situations, *nka*- for more remote ones. One might expect that these dialects would express past habituality with the more remote prefix *nka*-, as 'habits tend to develop over a long period of past time' (Nurse 2008: 144). However, according to Kiso (2012: 124–125) both affixes may be used to express habitual meaning.[15] On the basis of this description, it thus seems that none of the surveyed dialects have a dedicated PST.HAB form. In all three types of dialects—those with only *ma*$_2$-, those with only *nka*-, and those with both affixes—the PST.IPFV is used for both past progressive and past habitual meaning. The examples in (24) are from a dialect with only *nka*-. (24a) illustrates a past progressive meaning, (24b) a past habitual one.

(24) a. *Pa-mene iye a-nka-lemb-a kalata, ine*
16-REL 3SG.FR.PRO I-PST.IPFV-write-FV IA.letter 1SG.FR.PRO
ndi-nka-dikirir-a m'-munda.
1SG-PST.IPFV-wait-FV 18-garden
'While he [my brother] was writing the letter, I was waiting in the garden.'

b. *Ch-aka cha-tha ti-nka-konz-a m-nyumba loweruka li.ri.l.onse.*
7-year 7-last 1PL-PST.IPFV-clean-FV 18-house 5.Saturday 5.every
'Last year we used to clean the house on Saturdays.' (Kiso 2012: 124)

As for the various future expressions in Nyanja, Kiso again finds significant variation in her material, but because there were fewer future-tense contexts in the questionnaire, it is not always clear what the deciding factors are. The Future Habitual forms are a case in point: while the prefix *zika*- was found in three locations (Mchinji, Kasiya, and Blantyre), another speaker from Blantyre used the form *zidza*-. Kiso also searches for the forms in a recent translation of the New Testament, and finds that both are used, *zidza*- 12 times and *zika*- 10 times. It is unclear what, if anything, governs this variation. An example of a Future Habitual form from the questionnaire is given in (25a). (25b) is from the Bible translation (Matt. 24: 10).

(25) a. *A-zika-lemb-a ma-kalata.*
I-FUT.HAB-write-FV 6-letter
(A: My brother has got a new job. He will start tomorrow. B: What kind of work will he do there?) 'He will write letters.'

b. *Pa nthawi i-mene-yo a-mbiri a-dza-tay-a chi-khulupiriro cha-o,*
16 9.time 9-REL-DEM II-much II-RFUT-discard-FV 7-faith 7-DEM
a-zidza-perek-an-a n-ku-ma-dan-a.
II-FUT.HAB-betray-RECP-FV CONN-15-PRS.HAB-hate-FV
'At that time when many will turn away from the faith, they will betray and hate each other.' (Kiso 2012: 138)

15 This is in accord with the earlier description by Mapanje (1983: 122), who also mentions both forms, apparently without any difference in meaning despite the different translations: *tì-nká-thàmáng-á* (1SG-PST.IPFV-run-FV) 'we used to run' and *tì-mà-thámáng-á* 'we would run'.

The Future Habitual affixes are probably derived from from the Hodiernal Future (*zi-*) and the Ventive (*dza-*) and Itive (*ka-*) prefixes (Kiso 2012: 139). However, because the forms are relatively infrequent and have largely been overlooked in the earlier literature, their exact origins remain uncertain. I have also not been able to find any information on the PRS.HAB prefix *ma*$_1$-. Nurse (2008: 252–253) discusses the occurrence of a past-tense prefix *ma-* in several Bantu languages, which he derives from a verb meaning 'finish', but this most likely corresponds to the Nyanja PST.IPFV prefix *ma*$_2$-.[16] Nurse explicitly mentions that Nyanja *ma*$_1$- is ignored along with similar morphemes in five other languages because they are 'semantically and geographically separate' from the languages with past-tense *ma-*.[17] Again, the surveyed literature leaves ample room for future work.

5 Comparison and discussion

The primary goal of the preceding pages has been to survey the habitual markers in the four languages, which other meanings they may express, and what their likely origins are. Unsurprisingly, the answers to these questions differ between the languages. In this section I compare the findings from the four languages and discuss them in light of the literature on habituals surveyed in section 2.

Three formal strategies were found in the four languages: verbal prefixes (Swahili *hu-*; Fwe *náku-*; Nyanja *ma*$_1$- and *zika-*/*zidza-*), verbal suffixes (Fwe *-ang*), and 'quasi-auxiliaries' (Eton *dìŋ* and *zə̀zə̀*). This fits the general typological profile of Bantu verb forms, although it should be borne in mind that less central ('grammaticalized') expressions of habitual meaning, such as adverbs or complement-taking predicates, may have been overlooked in the survey. A number of the markers are reported to have cooccurrence restrictions which are not obviously functionally motivated. Swahili *hu-* is not compatible with person and noun class prefixes and cannot cooccur with any markers of past and future tense. The Fwe Habitual 2 *náku-* is reported by Gunnink (2018) not to cooccur with any of the basic Past prefixes (but see the discussion of [19] above). And Nyanja *ma*$_1$- and *zidza-*/*zika-* are restricted to present and future contexts, respectively.

Considering the existing cross-linguistic literature on habituals, such as Dahl (1985) and Bybee et al. (1994), the findings from the four languages are striking in that none of them appear to have dedicated past-tense habituals—if anything, the habitual markers in the languages are less rather than more likely to appear in past-tense contexts. At least in Swahili and Nyanja this seems to be excluded, and the habitual expressions in these two languages are thus markedly different from English *used to*. Four languages are, of course, too little to base any generalizations on, but it would be interesting to investigate whether past-tense habituals are rare in Bantu more generally.

16 Presumably the verb meaning 'finish' is the item reconstructed **màd* (BLR 2143) by Bastin et al. (2002). Nurse (2008) gives the form **-mala*.

17 In the case of Nyanja, this is of course somewhat inaccurate, as PRS.HAB *ma*$_1$- and PST.IPFV *ma*$_2$- occur alongside each other. The latter prefix is listed as 'Past HAB (?)' in the material in Nurse (2019: N30), but in light of Kiso's findings this could be corrected.

The patterns of coexpression also differ between the languages. Swahili *hu-* is widely reported to be particularly common in aphorisms and proverbs (e.g. Ashton 1944), so in Dahl's terms this would be an example of a 'habitual–generic' marker. Fwe *náku-* and Nyanja *ma*$_1$- are comparable in this respect, as evidenced by examples like (17) and (22b) above. In Eton, on the other hand, at least one of quasi-auxiliaries (*dìŋ*) seems to be closer to Xrakovskij's (1997) conception of habituals, as it is used both for iterative and 'canonical' habitual expressions. For the other Eton quasi-auxiliary (*zə̀zə̀*), only a single example was found in the literature, so nothing further can be said about its range of uses.

Table 5: Sources of habituals

'love, like'	Eton *dìŋ*
COP + INF	Swahili *hu-*; Fwe *náku-*
PB IPFV suffix	Fwe *-ang*
PB 'know' (?)	Eton *zə̀zə̀*
FUT + ventive (?)	Nyanja *zidza-*
FUT + itive (?)	Nyanja *zika-*
?	Nyanja *ma*$_1$-

As for the likely origins of the habitual markers, Table 5 sums up the lexical or grammatical sources identified. The first three lines represent fairly certain etymologies. For Eton *dìŋ* the original meaning 'love, like' is still current, and in Ewondo this is the only meaning of the predicate (see section 4.1). It is not obvious, however, whether the iterative or habitual meaning of *dìŋ* developed first. In the case of Swahili *hu-*, Nurse & Hinnebusch (1993) cite comparative evidence from other Sabaki languages to back up the etymology. The origin of Fwe *náku-* is similar to Swahili *hu-*, whereas Fwe *-ang* likely goes back to a Proto-Bantu suffix. The exact meaning of this in the proto-language is of course unrecoverable.

The markers below the horizontal line in Table 5 have more obscure—or unknown—origins. I have tentatively suggested (footnote 9) that Eton *zə̀zə̀* is from a Proto-Bantu verb meaning 'know'. Kiso (2012) suggests that Nyanja *zidza-* and *zika-* are derived from one of the future tenses and the Ventive and Itive prefixes, respectively, but the details are uncertain. For Nyanja *ma*$_1$- I was not able to identify an etymology, although comparative work would almost certainly throw more light on this and the other markers in the survey.

Finally, it is worth returning to Carlson's characterization of habituals as a rather marginal phenomenon. According to Carlson (2012: 842), the languages where they occur usually have 'nothing resembling a field of contrasting markers'. My small sample of Bantu languages suggests a slightly more complicated picture, as three of the four languages are reported to have more than one habitual marker. In the case of Nyanja there is evidently a division of labour between these—*ma*$_1$- is used for the present, *zidza-* and *zika-* for the future—while the situation in Eton and Fwe is much less clear. In this case, as in so many others, more research is needed.

Glossing abbreviations

1	1st person
I(a)	noun classes 1 and 1a (Fwe and Nyanja)
II	noun class 2
III	noun class 3
4–18	noun classes 4–18
ADV	adverbial
APPL	applicative
AUG	augment
BACKGR	background tense
CAUS	causative
COMP	complementizer
CONN	connective
COP	copula
DEM	demonstrative
DIST	distal
EMPH	emphatic
FR.PRO	free pronoun
FUT	future
FV	final vowel
G	Eton prefinal 'G-form' (Van de Velde 2008: 245)
HAB	habitual
IPFV	imperfective
LOC	locative
LT	linking tone (Eton)
NPPR	non-final personal pronoun (Eton)
NPST	near past
OBJ	object
PASS	passive
PFV	perfective
PL	plural
PLUR	pluractional
POSS	possessive
PRF	perfect
PROG	progressive
PST	past
R-	remote
RECP	reciprocal
REFL	reflexive
REL	relative
SBJV	subjunctive
SG	singular
Y-	hesternal ('yesterday's') past

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