The structure and semantics of the Luganda near-synonym evidential particles *nti* and *mbu*

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In this article, I describe the structure and semantics of the Luganda particles *nti* and *mbu* that have previously been considered as having the same or similar meanings. By analysing Luganda corpus data, I show that contrary to what is reported in the literature, the two particles are structurally different and also perform distinct functions. *Nti* is mainly a quotative complementizer, while *mbu* can introduce an independent clause. Whereas *nti* only expresses direct evidence in addition to its complementation function, *mbu* expresses hearsay evidence, doubt, disbelief, and disapproval. The confusion between the meaning of the two particles is probably caused by the conflation of the direct evidence function of *nti* and the hearsay evidence function of *mbu*.

**Keywords:** near-synonym, evidentiality, particles, corpus, *nti, mbu*, Luganda, Bantu

1. Introduction

Often translated as ‘that’, the Luganda particles *nti* and *mbu* have been identified as some of the markers of evidentiality in Luganda, alongside other strategies, i.e. the conditional/modal prefix -*andi-, and the modal verbs -*yinz-, -*téekw- and -*lina* (Kawalya, forthcoming). From this exploratory study of evidentiality in Luganda, it is apparent that the two forms are semantically very close. In fact, they are presented as expressing the same type of evidence, i.e. hearsay evidence.

Despite this, however, in day-to-day usage, speakers of Luganda do not seem to use the two particles interchangeably. In Example (1), *mbu*, which is used sentence finally (although it can also occur at the beginning) cannot be replaced with *nti*. Similarly, in (2), *nti* may not be replaced with *mbu* to convey the same meaning.

(1)  
Omusájja báámusánze mu nsíkó, mbú.

O-mu-sajja ba-a-mu-sanje mu n-siko mbú

AUG1-NP1-man SM2-PST-OM1-find.PFV LOC18 NP9-bush that

‘They found the man in the bush, they say.’

(2)  
Yágámbye nti omusájja báámusánze mu nsíkó.

y-a-gamb ye nti o-mu-sajja ba-a-mu-sanze mu n-siko

SM1-PST-say-PFV that AUG1-NP1-man SM2-PST-OM1-find.PFV LOC18 NP9-bush

‘He said that they found the man in the bush.’

This suggests that there exist differences between their usage, even when they appear to be expressing the same evidential type. In this study, I describe the structure and semantic range of *nti* and *mbu* with a view of establishing the subtle differences that exist between the usage of these evidential markers.

There are various understandings of the term ‘evidentiality’, as well as different typologies that have been proposed (see Aikhenvald, 2004; Boye, 2012; Chafe & Nichols, 1986; DeLancey, 2012; Hengeveld & Olbertz, 2012; Willet, 1998). According to Willet (1998), the primary distinction within evidentiality in natural language is the one between direct evidence and indirect evidence. Direct evidentials are used “when the speaker has witnessed the action” while indirect evidentials are used when the speaker has “either deduced the action or has heard about it from others” (see also Cornillie, 2009). Under Willet’s (1998) typology, non-firsthand/indirect evidence includes reported and inferred evidence, while firsthand evidence includes directly attested evidence. Among reported evidence, there is information obtained from another person (second or third person or folklore), as well as inferred evidence, which includes information deduced through reasoning. Firsthand evidence is obtained from seeing or through other senses.

A more recent categorization of evidentiality by Aikhenvald (2003, 2004), who defines evidentiality as an indication of the nature of the source of information, distinguishes between languages with a dedicated system of marking evidentiality and languages that do not have evidentiality as a grammatical category. In the former class of languages, for every statement it is obligatory to specify the type of source on which it is based. Since every language has some way of making reference to the source of information, regardless of whether they have an evidentiality system or not, for the latter...

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class, Aikhenvald proposes the use of other “evidentiality strategies”, which may include (i) non-indicative moods, modalities, and future, (ii) perfect, resultative, and past tenses, (iii) passives, (iv) nominalizations, (v) complementation, (vi) person marking, (vii) demonstratives, and (viii) reported speech. These evidentiality strategies have, in addition, other none evidential undertones. In this paper, both evidential and non-evidential uses of the particles nti and mbu are described.

In Section 2, I review literature on evidentiality in Bantu languages. Section 3 concerns previous descriptions of nti and mbu, as well as a survey of cognates of nti and mbu in other Bantu languages. In Section 4, the structure of nti and mbu is presented based on corpus data, and in Section 5, other functions of the two particles are described. The discussion and conclusion are presented in Section 6.

2. Evidentiality in Bantu languages

Although there are limited dedicated studies on evidentiality in Bantu languages (and generally in African languages) (Aikhenvald, 2004; Botne, 1997; Gluckman & Bowler, 2016; Kanijo, 2020), the subject of evidentiality has been discussed in other studies in Bantu languages, especially those about complementation, since evidentiality has been identified as one of the functions of Bantu complementizers.

One of the most detailed study of evidentiality in a Bantu language is Botne (1997) for Lega (D25). In this study, it is shown that in Lega, evidentiality is expressed by the use of particles. Botne identifies three evidential particles in the language: āmbo, ēmbɛ, and ampó, which, respectively, indicate “that the information expressed is taken on the authority of another and has not been obtained through one’s own experience”, as in Example (3); weak inference based on auditory (but also tactile or visual) evidence, as in (4); and cogency of evidence, i.e. that “the speaker has evidence to support the proposition being asserted”, as in (5) (see also Botne, 1995, 2020).

(3) āmbo Amísi ēzi nzéla
EV Amísi SM₁-know path¹
‘[They say/I hear tell (that)] Amísi knows the way.’ (Botne, 1997: 511)

(4) ēmbɛ mbula zékolɛka
maybe NP₂-rain SM₂-fall-FV
‘Maybe it will rain.’ (Botne, 1997: 515)

(5) ampó namönínɛ: bafalánsa bɛkuzilya
EV SM₁₈₀-PST-see-PFV NP₂-Frenchman NP₁-PRS-OM₂-eat
‘[In fact] I saw Frenchmen cat them (frogs)’ (Botne, 1997: 518)

Other dedicated studies on evidentiality in Bantu languages include Kanijo (2020), Roth (2018)², and Gluckman and Bowler (2016). In his exposition of evidential strategies in Nyamwezi (F22), Kanijo identifies the hodiernal past marker -ag- and the imperfective marker -lu- as strategies used when speakers have evidence to support the proposition, as in (6) and (7) while the static construction involving -ile is used when the speaker’s evidence is based on inferences, as in (8).

Context: The speaker looks at the mangoes in a basket in front of her/him.

(6) manyéɛmbɛ goa/lólaga
ma-nyéɛmbɛ gá-á-bol-ag-a
NP₂-mango SM₂-PST-be(come).rotten-HOD.PST-FV
‘The mangoes are rotten (that is, have become rotten) (I’m sure).’ (Kanijo, 2020: 90)

(7) lólaga/! anja kokazimá tála
lol-ag-a a-lu-ɛ-a ko-ka-zim-a tála
look-IMP-FV SM₁-IPFV-go-FV NP₁₅-IT-extinguish-FV NP₂-lamp
‘Look! S/he is going to switch off the light.’ (Kanijo, 2020: 94)

Context: The speaker suspects that the mangoes are rotten from touching them, because they are softer than usual (inference evidence), or because s/he was told so by someone else (reported evidence).

¹ The glossing from other sources has been slightly modified for consistency.
² In this Thesis on Aspect in Ikoma, Roth includes a sub chapter on evidentiality in Ikoma.
Roth (2018) reports that in Ikoma (JE45), the perfect marker -ka- indicates direct evidence through visual or auditory confirmation, as in (9), while the perfective marker -iri is used when the speaker lacks direct evidence, but only gets the information from secondhand sources, as shown in Example (10).

Example (9) a-ká-bëok-a
FOC-SM₁-wake_up-PFV
’S/he is waking up/has just woken up.’ (Roth, 2018: 89)

According to Gluckman and Bowler, in Logooli (JE41), the subject agreement marker, e- (class 9 agreement), used with verbs of perception, e.g. kuðan ‘seem’ and kuroreka ‘appear’ “conveys that the speaker has indirectly perceived evidence for the truth of the embedded proposition”, as in (11), while the use of ga- (class 6 agreement), “conveys that the speaker has directly perceived evidence for the truth of the proposition” as seen in (12).

Example (10) n-a-bëok-iri
FOC-SM₁-wake_up-PFV
’S/he has just woken up (is awake).’ (Roth, 2018: 89)

Example (11) e-fan-a
kuresa Imali a-saal-a
SM₁-seem-FV like Imali SM₁-be.sick-FV
‘It seems like Imali is sick’
Context: It’s flu season, and Imali didn’t come to school. (Gluckman & Bowler, 2016: 1065)

Example (12) ga-fan-a
kuresa Imali a-saal-a
SM₁-seem-FV like Imali SM₁-be.sick-FV
‘It seems like Imali is sick’
Context: The speaker sees Imali coughing and sneezing. (Gluckman & Bowler, 2016: 1065)

Other studies on Bantu that include evidentiality in their descriptions include Kihara (2018), who describes the Gĩkũyũ complementizer ali as a hearsay marker; Persohn (2017), who discusses the evidential of report baatu, and Namulemu (2006), who identifies the particle mbo as a hearsay marker in Lunyole (JE35), as well as the prefixes po- and ko-, which also “operate semantically as evidentiality markers”. For Lubukusu (JE31c), Diercks (2013) identifies an agreeing complementizer ali that is used when the subject of the sentence is the source of information. Crane, Hyman, and Tukumu (2011) also identify tense and aspect as evidential strategies used in Nzadi (B865).

From the outgoing, and as noted by Kanijo (2020), it is apparent that in Bantu languages, evidentiality is mostly expressed through non-evidential markers, e.g. tense, aspect and mood markers.

3. Previous descriptions of nti and mbu

Because of the general scarcity of evidentiality studies in Bantu and African languages, it is not surprising that the two evidential particles, nti and mbu have, equally, not been substantially described in the existing literature. However, as is the case with other evidentiality strategies, the particles nti and mbu possess other non-evidential usages that have spontaneously and briefly been mentioned in some literature in and on Luganda, mainly dictionaries and grammars.

According to one of the oldest Luganda bilingual dictionaries by Pilkinson (1899), as well as other later dictionaries (e.g. Mulira & Ndawula, 1952; Murphy, 1972; Snoxall, 1967), nti is defined as a conjunction used to introduce reported speech, equivalent to the English ‘that, saying, namely’, as in (13).
In the same literature, *mbu* is portrayed as having the same meaning or function as *nti*. Murphy (1972), for example, defines it as a conjunction that introduces reported speech, translating to ‘that’ in English, as in (14), while Pilkington (1899: 68) states, even more boldly, that *mbu* is the “same as *nti*”. In the same vain, Kawalya (forthcoming), in a recent description of evidentiality strategies in Luganda, shows that both *nti* and *mbu* express reported/hearsay\(^3\) information, as in (15) for *nti* and (16) for *mbu*.

(14) Mbu omubbi bamukutte.

\[ \text{mbu} \quad \text{o-mu-bbi} \quad \text{ba-Ø-mu-kutte} \]

\[ \text{that} \quad \text{AUG\(_1\)-NP\(_1\)-thief} \quad \text{SM\(_2\)-PRS-OM\(_2\)-catch.PFV} \]

‘Apparently (I think, I have heard) they have caught the thief.’ (Murphy, 1972)

(15) … Dr. Sam Eswagu agamba *nti* abântú ábásóbá mu 250 be bááli básábyé tûtákitá eno …

Dr. Sam Eswagu  a-Ø-gamb-a  *nti*  a-ba-ntu

Dr. Sam Eswagu  SM\(_2\)-PRS-say-FV  *nti*  AUG\(_2\)-NP\(_2\)-person

\[ \text{aba-sob-a} \quad \text{mu} \quad 250 \quad \text{be} \quad \text{ba-a-li} \quad \text{ba-sab-ye} \]

REL\(_2\)-exceed-FV  in  250  PP\(_2\)-REL  SM\(_2\)-PST-be  SM\(_2\)-ask-PFV

tulakita  e-no
tractor  PP\(_2\)-DEM\(_\text{a} \)

‘… Dr. Sam Eswagu says that more than 250 people had asked for this tractor …’

(BU130914-Tebalina, Newspapers, 2010s) (Kawalya, forthcoming)

(16) Ku mulúndí guno ahabáká mbu tebáámusángayó ewuwê.

\[ \text{ku} \quad \text{mu-lundi} \quad \text{gu-no} \quad \text{a-ba-baka} \]

LOC\(_{17}\)  NP\(_3\)-time  PP\(_3\)-DEM\(_\text{a} \)  AUG\(_2\)-NP\(_2\)-representative

\[ \text{mbu} \quad \text{te-ba-a-mu-sang-a}=\text{yo} \quad \text{e-wuwe} \]

\[ \text{apparently} \quad \text{NEG-SM\(_2\)-PST-OM\(_2\)-find-PFV}=\text{LOC}\(_{33}\) \quad \text{PP\(_2\)-his_home} \]

‘This time the representatives, apparently, did not find him there, at his home.’ (Kawalya, forthcoming)

In some other literature, *mbu* is shown as being used for “introducing hearsay information” (see Mulira & Ndawula, 1952; Snoxall, 1967). This is also the case in Kiingi (2009). In this more recent and, certainly, the most comprehensive monolingual dictionary of Luganda, *mbu* is described as a conjunction “used when someone is going to say words that they just heard from another person who was present when they were being said or who also just heard them, but when they are not sure”.\(^4\) Murphy (1972) is probably the only lexicographer, so far, who attempts to clarify the difference between the particles *nti* and *mbu*. Although he, like others, states that *mbu* “is similar in function to *nti*” (p. 333), he adds that *mbu* “implies doubt and uncertainty.”

In addition to the above descriptions, cognates of *nti* and *mbu* are found across other Bantu languages, and have been shown to have similar functions to those of the Luganda particles *nti* and *mbu*. To begin with *nti*, Ruruuli (JE103) has an identical form *nti*, which, according to Sørensen and Witzlack-Makarevich (2020: 92), is the most frequent complementizer, and that it marks indicative complements introduced by perception predicates, such as ‘see’, as in (17), but also knowledge predicates like ‘know’, propositional attitude predicates like ‘think’, and utterance predicates, such as ‘say’. The form *nti* is also identically found in Lusoga (JE16), with the functions of marking ‘report, quote or confirm already established facts in the main clause’ (Nabirye, 2016: 390).

\[^{3}\text{To avoid confusion between reported speech and reported evidence, I will hence force use the terms indirect speech and hearsay evidence, respectively, except in citation.}\]

\[^{4}\text{My translation; see Kiingi (2009: 285)}\]
In Gikũyũ, Kihara (2018) describes the complementizer aṭi, a cognate of Luganda nti, which functions as an evidential as well as a dubitative and hearsay marker, in addition to its complementation function. In Example (18), the speaker uses the evidential aṭi to be non-committal on the truthfulness of the relayed information, and to show that the information was heard from someone else.

Example (18)

(18) "Ithe aṭi a-a-me-er-e
NP1 father EVD

ma-ti-ka-na-mū–gāi-ir-e
SM2-NEG-PST-TNS-OM1-share-PFV-FV

kī-nd ū.
NP1-thing.

‘Their father (is alleged to have) told them not to give him anything (from his estate).’ (Kihara, 2018: 111)

According to Myers (1975), Kamba has a similar form aṭi, which introduces complements with indicative verbs. Myers also discusses the form kūṭi in Chewa which, in addition to introducing indicative and subjunctive complements, implies that the speaker believes the complement clause to be true or highly likely. Similar forms are also reported by Persohn (2017), who gives the forms baatu and aṭi/eti as evidentials of report in Nyakyusa and Swahili, respectively (see also Gluckman, 2023; Persohn, 2020).

Turning to mbu, Botne (1995: 210) provides a list of languages with cognates of mbu. He labels these as MBO languages. They include Leke, C14 (bō), Bola, C35 (a mbɔɔ), Ngombe, C41 (bō), Mongo, C61 (mbɔ), Losikongo, C61 (āmbɔ), Ntomba-Inongo, C65 (a mbɔ), Ntomba-Bikoro, C66 (āmbɔ), Kela, C75 (mbɔ), Lega, D25 (āmbɔ), Nyanga, D43 (mbɔ), Kinande, J42 (amba), Kihunde, J51 (mbu), Shi, J53 (mpu), and Tembo, J57 (mbā). Botne also cites subordinating conjunctions kwamba and amba in Swahili and Kaonde, respectively, that are similar to mbu.

In the different languages, there are some differences in these forms’ structural distribution as well as their functions. For Lega, āmbɔ is used to show secondhand information, i.e. its use indicates that the information expressed is obtained from another person, but not through one’s own experience. Example (19) (a), for instance, is an epistemically neutral utterance without āmbɔ while the utterance in (19) (b) is marked with āmbɔ for evidentiality.

Example (19)

(19) a. Amīsi ēzi nzelā
Amisī SM1-know path

‘Amisi knows the way.’

b. āmbɔ Amīsi ēzi nzelā
EV Amisī SM1-know path

‘[They say/I hear tell (that)] Amisi knows the way.’ (Botne, 1995: 202)

Three other languages, closely related to Luganda, i.e. Lunyole (JE35), Ruruuli-Lunyala, and Lusoga (JE16) also make use of cognates of mbu. In Ruruuli-Lunyala, with a lexical similarity of 69% to Luganda (Ladefoged, Glick, & Criper, 1972), mbu is presented as introducing reported speech, and also indicating uncertainty, as in (20) (Namyalo et al., 2021: 508), while Namulemu (2006) describe mbo as a marker of hearsay, as used in (21). In Lusoga, the marker is said to be identical to mbu, as shown in (22).

Example (20)

(20) /n-a-wuliire mbu ba-kw-iz-a
NP1-wuliire mbu ba-kw-iz-a

SM3SG-PST-hear.PFV that SM2-PRS-come-FV

‘I heard that they are coming.’ (Namyalo et al., 2021: 508)

Example (21)

(21) /hūnātī:nē mbō/ ‘I understand we are going’
/hūnātī:nē mbō / ‘we are going, aren’t we?’
/hūnātī:nē mbō/ ‘(don’t worry) we shall be going’ (Namulemu, 2006: 36)
In some other languages, the particle ngu/ngo is used to convey the information that is carried by mbu in Luganda. Some ngu languages include Runyoro, Runyankore, Rukiga and Ruhaya, while the ngo languages include Kinyarwanda, Kirundi, Ginya, Kinyamulenge, and Sukuma. Kinyarwanda and Kinyamulenge also use the form ko (see Botne, 1995; Givón & Kimenyi, 1974; Gluckman & Finholt, 2022).

4. The structure of nti and mbu

The description of nti and mbu presented in this article is mainly based on data from a Luganda corpus of 5,949,533 running words (tokens). The corpus comprises materials from 14 decades (i.e. 1890s to 2020s) and 18 topics/genres (i.e. agricultural documents, cultural texts, environmental documents, financial texts, folktales, health documents, historical texts, inspirational materials, instructional materials, legal texts, magazines, newspapers, novels, plays, political documents, radio news, religious texts, and songs). The corpus was queried with WordSmith Tools software (Scott, 1996-2022) and the search results (concordance lines) were then exported to Excel spreadsheets for analysis. The forms nti and mbu were queried individually. The structural analysis involved identification of the type and position of the clause occupied by the particles nti and mbu, as well as their surrounding environments.

4.1 The structure of nti. The analysis of corpus instances in respect of nti shows that the particle occurs as an introducer of an embedded clause, mostly following a verb of ‘say/tell’, i.e. -gamb- as in (23), but it can also follow other verbs, as in (24), where it cognizes a verb of ‘think’.

(23) Awo bwe báákomawo mu ngu bá n’ámúgámámba nti jangú tugendé ffembí.
awo bwe ba-a-komawo mu N-ju bba
then when SM2-PST-come.back LOC18 NP3-house her.husband
ne a-mu-gamb-a nti jangu tu-gend-e ffembí
and SM1-OM1-tell-FV that come SM1PR-PRS-go-SBJV together
‘Then when they came back to the house, her husband told her that let us go together.’
(Engero 4, Folktales, 1890s)

(24) Túlowooza nti gávuméní esáná okúkúyúša kú ndówóózá yááyó efê nnyó ku by’óbulimi.
Tu-Ø-lowooz-a nti gavumenti e-saan-a
SM1PL-PRS-think-FV that government SM3-oughty-FV
o-ku-kyus-a ku N-dowooza ya-a-yo
AUG15-NP15-change-FV LOC17 NP3-thought PP3-POSS3
e-f-e nnyo ku by-a o-bu-limi
SM3-focus-SBJV much LOC17 PP3-CONN AUG14-NP14-farming
‘We think that the government should change its thoughts and focus much on farming.’
(ED130730-Kiki, Newspapers, 2010s)

In instances such as (25), nti is used to introduce an embedded clause, but the embedding verb is elided and remains only implied. This same utterance could be made by inserting the verb of ‘say’ between Kabaka and nti, thereby having the same structure as (23).

(25) … até Kasújju n’ágikwásá Kábúka nti akujéémeranga omúttanga …
ate Kasujju ne a-gi-kwas-a Kabaka nti
and Kasujju and SM1-OM1-give-FV King that
a-ku-jeem-er-a-nga o-mu-tt-a-nga
SM₁-OM₂SG-rebel-APPL-FV-HAB SM₁₂SG-OM₁₂SG-kill-FV-HAB
‘... and Kasuju gave it to the King [saying] that “you should kill whoever rebels against you ...”’
(Basekabaka - 1920s, Cultural Texts, 1920s)

Even in cases where it appears to be occurring at the beginning of a sentence, as in (26), nti still introduces an embedded clause. Sentence (26), in particular, is a response to a question Bw’abahde ava wano, abagambye atya? ‘When he was leaving this place, what did he tell you?’ In response, therefore, the speaker avoids repeating the verb atagambye ‘he has told us’, which has already been mentioned in the preceding discourse, hence starting the answer straight with nti ‘that’.

(26) 

nti tetuddangayó okumúyitá nga tetúnnazimbá ssábó.

At the beginning of a sentence, as in (26), nti tetuddangayó okumúyitá nga tetúnnazimbá ssábó.

4.2 The structure of mbu. Unlike nti, which appears to occur only in embedded clauses, mbu is used without an embedding predicate. In (27) mbu heads an independent clause, because there is no reason to assume an elided clause as in the case of (26).

(27) 

Mbu e-kibónerezo kyé yándibáváddé kya kubálwisa ku ssombo.

In addition, mbu can occur in other positions of the clause. In (28), for example, it appears in the mid-position of the clause, while in (29) it is in the final position of the clause.

(28) 

Obulámú obw’ókwéjálábyá mbu masánnyaláze, sí kye kikúlu.

5. Functions of nti and mbu

This section describes functions of the particles nti and mbu in addition to the complementation functions described in Section 4. The analysis presented in this section involved working out the meaning and function of the particles in their different contexts of usage. In cases where the corpus could not provide an appropriate context for interpretation, other native speakers of the language were asked for clarity.
5.1 Functions of nti. As reported in the existing literature, nti was also found in our corpus to be used as a quotative marker, to introduce both direct quotes as in (30) and indirect quotes as in (31). In (30), the use of the first-person subject pronoun (n-) in the verb in the embedded clause shows that this is indeed a direct quote. For (31), the embedded clause has a third person subject (a-), which signifies that it cannot be a direct quote. This behaviour is not uncommon in Bantu languages. Kawasha (2007: 184), for example, reports that direct and indirect quotes are introduced by the same subject-agreeing complementizers in the four languages that he investigated, i.e. Chokwe, Luchazi, Lunda, and Luvale.

(30) Nayé ensowera n’égámbá Tégénnáku nti “Oyo gwé nnáágwá mu kyenyi nga ye wúwó.”
    naye e-N-sowera ne e-gamb-a Tegennaku
    but AUG₂-NP₉-housefly and SM₉-tell-FV Tegennaku
    nti o-yo gw-e n-naa-gw-a
    that PP₁-DEM PP₁-REL SM₁₊₁₀-FUT-fall-FV
    mu ky-enyi nga y-e wuwo
    */'But the housefly told Tegennaku that “The one I fall on the face will be the one for you.”’*/
    LOC₁₈ NP₁-face and PP₁-REL yours

(Akatobo Ak’Okusomwanga, Folktales, 1940s)

(31) Lukwago agámbye nti agéndá kúkwatáągáá n’ákúlirá emírímu mú Kámpálá, Jennifer Musisi.
    Lukwago a-Ø-gamb-ye nti a-Ø-gend-a
    Lukwago SM₁₊₁₀-say-PFV that SM₁₊₁₀-go-FV
    ku-kwatagan-a ne a-Ø-kulir-a e-mi-rimu
    NP₁₊₁₀-work-PFV with SM₁₊₁₀-lead-FV AUG₁-NP₁-e-work
    mu Kampala Jennifer Musisi
    LOC₁₈ Kampala Jennifer Musisi
    */'Lukwago said that he is going to work with the Executive Director of Kampala, Jennifer Musisi.’*/
    (ED110620-Lukwago, Newspapers, 2010s)

Apart from introducing quotes, nti can be used to report direct evidence. Speakers can use it to report that they have heard someone say something. In Example (15), repeated below as (32), the speaker reports information that she/he heard directly from Dr. Sam Eswagu. Similarly, Example (33) is a case where the speaker reports what she/he her/himself heard Kayemba explain.

(32) … Dr. Sam Eswagu agamba nti abántú ábásóbá mu 250 be bááli básábyé túlákitá eno …
    Dr. Sam Eswagu a-Ø-gamb-a nti a-ba-ntu
    Dr. Sam Eswagu SM₁₊₁₀-say-PFV that AUG₂-NP₂-person
    aba-sob-a mu 250 be ba-a-li ba-sab-ye
    REL₂-exceed-FV in 250 PP₂-REL SM₂-PST-be SM₂-ask-PFV
    tulakita e-no
    tractor PP₂-DEMa
    ‘… Dr. Sam Eswagu says that more than 250 people had asked for this tractor …’
    (BU130914-Tebalina, Newspapers, 2010s)

(33) Kayemba ányonnyola nti ekyúmá kíno kímúyámbýe nnyó okugóngzá ómúlímu gwe erá nga kírná ebirdungi bíngi ngá bino wammanga.
    Kayemba a-Ø-nyonnyol-a nti e-ky-uma ki-no
    Kayemba SM₁₊₁₀-explain-PFV that AUG₇-NP₇-machine PP₇-DEMa
The possibility of *nti* to express evidentiality in addition to its complementation function is not surprising, since its cognates in other languages behave in a similar manner. As seen in Section 3, for example, the cognates of *nti* in Gĩkũyũ, Chewa, Nyakyusa, and Swahili have evidential functions.

### 5.2 Functions of *mbu*.

In the few sources that have described *mbu* and its cognates, it has been shown as a marker of hearsay evidence (see Botne, 1995, 1997; Gluckman, 2023; Kawalya, forthcoming; Namulemu, 2006; Nassenstein, 2018). Indeed, in the present analysis, *mbu* is found to mark hearsay information, as in (34) and (35). In these examples, the use of *mbu* shows that the speaker did not witness the events firsthand, but they just got the information from other sources, who, in turn, also have got it from other sources.

(34) Twakūlā tūwulirā embōózī z’ejjǐnjā lino *mbu* lyámirā abagōle erā nga tūlīyā …

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>tw-a-kul-a</th>
<th>tu-wulir-a</th>
<th>e-N-boozi</th>
<th>zi-a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SM1Pl-PST-grow_up-FV</strong></td>
<td><strong>SM1Pl-hear-FV</strong></td>
<td><strong>AUG10-NP10-story</strong></td>
<td><strong>PP10-CONN</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘We grew up hearing stories of this rock, that it swallowed brides and we always feared it …’ (ED120716-Nkobenjera, Newspapers, 2010s)

(35) Amatēčēkā agō gonnā gāábātēkēbwākō olw’ōkūbāngā *mbu* jjājaabwe Ggulūddene yalf mulángirā omwānā wā Kintu.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ga-a-ba-teek-ebw-a-ko</th>
<th>olwokubanga</th>
<th><strong>mbu</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SM6-PST-OM2-impose-PASS-FV=LOC17</strong></td>
<td>because</td>
<td><strong>apparently</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘All those restrictions were imposed on them because apparently their grandfather Gguluddene was a prince, son of Kintu.’ (Amannya, Cultural Texts, 1980s)

In addition to expressing hearsay evidence, *mbu* signifies additional attitudinal overtones. In (34), for example, *mbu* first of all shows that the speaker does not have firsthand information to the effect that the rock swallowed brides, but in addition, the speaker also doubts the truth of the story. Similarly, in (35), in addition to showing that the speaker just heard from other sources that their grandfather Gguluddene was a son of Kintu, the use of *mbu* signifies that the speaker doubts the truth of the claim. In this case, *mbu* functions as a dubitative marker. A dubitative marker, according to Bybee (1985:...
expresses doubt as to whether an event described in a proposition occurred or will occur. This tendency is also found in other Bantu languages, e.g. Gĩkũyũ and Lega where the complementizers *ii* and *ambo* express doubt.

In Examples (36) and (37), the use of *mbu* shows disbelief towards the truthfulness of the proposition in the utterance; the speaker does not commit her/himself to the truthfulness of the embedded proposition. In this case, *mbu* behaves more like the (reason) complementizer *ngó* in Kinyamulenge, which is used in clauses in which the speaker denies the truth of the adverbial clause, unlike its counterpart *kó* that is used in clauses that “commit the speaker to a belief in the adverbial clause” (Gluckman & Finholt, 2022).

(36) Ekirũngi nti abalala yali abagáanyi okunywá ssukáali mbu ng’ayinzá ókúbahézzá énnýó. 
E-kiri-rungi nti a-ba-lala y-a-li a-ba-gaanyi
AUG1-REL1-nti that SM1-PST-be SM1-OM2-stop
o-ku-nyw-a ssukaali mbu nga a-yinz-a
AUG15-NP15-drink-FV sugar that because SM1-may-FV
o-ku-ba-gezz-a ennyo
AUG15-NP15-OM2-grow.big.CAUS-FV a_lot
‘The good thing is that he had stopped others from taking sugar, that because it could make them very big.’
[But I am not sure about the truth of this] (Amaka, Novels, 1980s)

(37) Sisobola kugoberera muwala mukulu ng’ooyo buli w’alaze mbu mnukumu aleke empisa ze embi
si-sobol-a ku-goberer-a mu-wala mu-kulu
NEG.SM1SG-be_able-FV NP15-follow-FV NP11-girl PP1-mature
nga o-yo buli we a-laze mbu N-mu-kuuma
like PP1-DEMmb every REL16 SM1-go.PFV that SM1SG-OM1-protect
a-lek-e e-N-pisa zi-e e-N-bi
SM1-SBJV AUG10-NP10-behaviour PP10-POS1 REL10-PP10-bad
‘I cannot follow a mature girl like that wherever she goes, that I am protecting her, to leave her bad behaviours.’ (Ekkomeru Eriggule, Plays, 2002s)

Finally, *mbu* can also be used to express disapproval. In Example (28), repeated below as (38), as well as in (39), the use of *mbu* outrightly shows the speaker’s bad opinion about the proposition in the utterances. In (38), the speaker uses *mbu* to show a dislike about the extravagant life of using electricity, while in (39), the speaker expresses a dislike about the idea of following a mature girl for the purpose of protecting her.

(38) Obulámú obw’ókwéjállázi mbu masánnýállázi, sí kye kikúlu.
o-bu-lamu o-bu-a o-kw-ejalaby-a
AUG14-NP14-life AUG12-NP14-CONN AUG15-NP15-be_extravant-FV
mbu ma-sánnýa-lázi si ky-e ki-kulu
that NP1-electricity not PP3-REL PP3-important
‘An extravagant life of [things like] electricity is not what is important.’ (Amaka, Religious Texts, 2010s)

(39) Tómbugúlíí mbu múlungí, múlungí kí oyo?
te-o-N-buuliri-a mbu mú-lungí mú-lungí
NEG-SM2SG-OM1SG-tell-FV that PP1-beautiful PP1-beautiful
ki o-yo
how PP2SG-DEMmb
‘Don’t tell me that she is beautiful, how beautiful is she?’ (Basooka, Novels, 2010s)
6. Discussion and conclusion

Section 4 has shown the type and position of clause that can be occupied by the particles nti and mbu. Nti has been shown to always occur in embedded clauses, mostly following a verb of ‘say/tell’. In some cases, the embedding verb may be elided, and in other cases, the entire independent clause may be elided, making it appear as if nti is occurring clause-initially. This function of introducing a complement clause is reported for cognates of nti in other Bantu languages, such as Kamba, Chewa, Gĩkũyũ, Ruluuli and Lusoga (Kihara, 2018; Myers, 1975; Nabirye, 2016; Sørensen & Witzlack-Makarevich, 2020). In contrast, mbu can appear in all positions of an independent clause: clause-initial, clause-medial and close-final. This seems to be a rare behaviour, as in other languages, the cognates of mbu introduce complement clauses. Table 1 shows a summary of (other) functions of nti and mbu. We can see from the table that nti is used as a quotative marker, for both direct and indirect quotes, as well as to report direct evidence, while mbu is used to express hearsay information, doubt, disbelief, and disapproval. This shows, first of all, that the two seemingly synonymous particles actually have specialized functions. The cause for the confusion could be from the different kinds of evidence expressed by the two particles, i.e. direct evidence by nti, and hearsay evidence by mbu. It is likely that the use of nti in situations where a speaker has not witnessed the event but they have heard directly from someone who witnessed it, is confused with the use of mbu in situations where the speaker got the information from a second or third party. With the use of nti in such cases, there is some degree of commitment by the speaker to the truthfulness of the relayed information, unlike with the use of mbu, where the speaker does not commit her/himself to the truthfulness of the information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Nti</th>
<th>mbu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct quote</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect quote</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct evidence</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearsay</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dubitative/doubt</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disbelief</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disapproval</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This article has shown the relationship between two Luganda particles, nti and mbu, that have hitherto been considered as having the same or similar meaning and function. The structural and semantic comparison of the two particles, based on corpus data, has shown that contrary to what is presented in the literature, the two particles have distinct meanings and functions. It is likely that the confusion between their meaning is brought about by the conflation of the direct evidence function of nti and the hearsay evidence function of mbu. The study has also uncovered an uncommon scenario where a complementizer-kind of element, in this case mbu, not only introduces an independent clause, but can also occupy a clause-final position.

These conclusions are mainly based on corpus data, with a possibility that some instances not represented in the corpus are not captured. There is therefore need for a more comprehensive study of evidentiality, combining both corpus and elicitation methods, to possibly uncover missed patterns.

Abbreviations and symbols

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APPL</td>
<td>applicative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUGx</td>
<td>augment of class x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAUS</td>
<td>causative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMP</td>
<td>complementizer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONNx</td>
<td>connective of class x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEMa</td>
<td>proximal demonstrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEMb</td>
<td>distal demonstrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVD</td>
<td>evidential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FUT</td>
<td>future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FV</td>
<td>final vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAB</td>
<td>habitual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOD</td>
<td>hodiernal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOCx</td>
<td>locative of class x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
N        homorganic nasal
NEG      negative
NPx      nominal prefix of class x
Ø        null morpheme
OMx      object marker of class x
PASS     passive
PFV      perfective
PL       plural
POSSx    possessive of class x
PPx      pronominal prefix of class x
PFV      perfective
PROG     progressive
PRS      present
PST      past
REL      relative
SBJV     subjunctive
SG       singular
SMx      subject marker of class x
UNR      unreality marker

References
Gluckman, J., & Bowler, M. (2016). Expletive agreement, evidentiality, and modality in Logooli. In M. Moroney, C.-R. Little, J. Collard, & D. Burgdorf (Eds.), Proceedings of the 26th semantics and linguistic theory conference: Available at: https://doi.org/10.3765/salt.v26i0.3935.


