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Working Papers in African Linguistics (WoPAL) vol. 1:
Selected outcomes of the ReNeLDA project

Edited by

Daisuke Shinagawa, Seunghun J. Lee, and Yuko Abe

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Preface

This volume is published as part of research outcome of the international joint research project entitled ‘Establishment of a Research Network for Exploring the Linguistic Diversity and Linguistic Dynamism in Africa (ReNeLDA)’ as a Core-to-Core Program: B. Asia-Africa Science Platforms, funded by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS). The three-year project from 2018 to 2020, with one year extension to 2021, aims to build a research network connecting linguists based in Africa and in Japan for making it possible to establish a collaborative way for the study of linguistic diversity and dynamism, especially through linguistic documentation and description of under-described languages. The network, involving renowned institutes for the study on African languages and linguistics, namely University of Dar es Salaam, MER Mathivha Centre for African Languages, Arts and Culture in University of Venda, Makerere University, University of Botswana, and University of Zambia, have yielded various achievements including two major workshops held at University of Dar es Salaam in March 2019 and at MER Mathivha Centre for African Languages, Arts and Culture, University of Venda, in March 2020. The result obtained through the two-week workshop at University of Venda is published as a comprehensive morphosyntactic description of six South African Bantu languages titled *Descriptive materials of morphosyntactic microvariation in Bantu vol. 2: A microparametric survey of morphosyntactic microvariation in Southern Bantu languages* (edited by Seunghun J. Lee, Yuko Abe, and Daisuke Shinagawa, published from ILCAA in 2021) and the sound recordings of the sample sentences are archived online at the project site (<https://renelda.aa-ken.jp/about.html>). The first publication of the *Working Papers in African Linguistics* (WoPAL) thus constitutes part of the final

results of the ReNeLDA project officially closing in March 2022. However, fortunately enough, the publication of the WoPAL series will be succeeded by the follow up project funded by JSPS under the category of the Promotion of Joint International Research (Fostering Joint International Research (B)) entitled ‘Microvariation in Bantu languages of South Africa: building theories from typology data (JSAntu)’ headed by Seunghun J. Lee. We are thus not only honoured with its first publication but also ambitious for the future development of this publication series. Last but not least, we would like to express our deepest gratitude to Kyoungwon Jeong for his enthusiastic editorial work, without which this volume would not have taken this shape.

March 2022,

The editors

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Adaptation and Adoption of Swahili Loanwords into Alagwa: Phonological Observation

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Abstract

The Swahili words borrowed into Alagwa, are being adopted with exotic and typically nativised rendering to a series of apparent phonological patterns. This paper which is guided by Assimilation theory and the direct phonological diffusion offers an account of how Kiswahili loanwords are borrowed into Alagwa a Southern Cushitic language, spoken in Kondoa district- Dodoma, Tanzania. It provides evidence from 520 loanwords collected from texts, and fieldwork conducted in purposively selected villages of Humay, Tlawi, and Kwa Dinu. Fieldwork employed observation, and oral elicitation that involved five native speakers from each village. The qualitative analysis of the data revealed both the integration and the adoption of the loanword sounds into Alagwa. The former involved nativisation of loanwords to fit the phonological features, and the latter concerns the direct importation of loanword features through the lexical diffusion of the sound features into systems of the language; hence, filling the gap in the phoneme inventory. Phonologically, some non-native phonemes are typically replaced by native sounds which have similar features to the original Swahili phoneme, and where no such similar phoneme exists, the non-native sound is tolerated. Where Swahili words do not violate any phonological rule, they are adopted without change. Thus, this study recommends further studies of Swahili loanwords in the semantics, morphological, syntax, and discourse-related aspects of Alagwa, as well as investigation of loanwords from other languages.

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Key words

Adaptation, adoption, Swahili, Alagwa, loanwords, phonology

1. The Language and the Contact Situation

Alagwa is a West-Rift Southern Cushitic language of the Afro-Asiatic family (ISO Code 639-3) (Mous, 2016). The Alagwa live in Kondoa-Dodoma and some areas in Hanang'w-Manyara. The number of Alagwa native speakers is approximately 52,816 (LoT, 2009). They live mainly between the Kondoa-Babati road and the Bubu/Dudu River. In areas like Tlawi, So/eera, Kolo, Changaa, Bereko, Kikilo, and Kikore, Alagwa intermingles with Rangi, a Bantu speaking community. They mix with Gorowa in villages of Magafaa and Matanganaimo; while they mix with Barabaig in Gisambalang and Sirop. Also, a number of Alagwa live in the towns of Kondoa, Babati (Mous, 2016), Chemba, and Dodoma city. In some areas, the Alagwa interact with the Sandawe-Khoisan (Mous, 2016) speaking community. With this regard they contact Rangi, Gorowa, Barabaig, Sandawe, and Iraqw who are migrating south wards from Mbulu, Hanangw', and Babati.

Languages which are in contact normally share materials where the less dominant language tends to mostly borrow linguistic aspects of the dominant language. However, the exchange of material is asymmetric, in the sense that one language borrowed heavily from another language, especially a minority language borrows many linguistic materials of a majority language. In other words, when two discourse networks come into contact they end up inter-influencing each other through the exchange of linguistic materials which is certainly not equivalent (Myers-Scotton, 2006). The socioculturally, economically, and politically dominant language like Swahili becomes a donor language to all Ethnic Community Languages (ECLs) of Tanzania including Alagwa. ECLs of Tanzania including Alagwa

have intermingled for long with Swahili, which is a more privileged regional lingua franca in Tanzania. Similar to other ECLs, Swahili has for more than a century been in contact with Alagwa. The contact which motivated the language to borrow frequently Swahili terms for both cultural and core borrowing (Myers-Scotton, 2002; 2006) or basic and non-basic (Thomason, 2001). In cultural borrowings, the recipient languages transfer Swahili new terms while core borrowings involve terms which supplant some existing lexicon of the language (borrowing for prestigious) - in core borrowings duplicate elements that exist in recipient lexicon (Myers-Scotton, 2006).

Since the 19th century, there have been sweeping changes in the areas where Alagwa language is spoken, putting Swahili to the front as the national language, major language of international religions (Islamic and Christianity), education, political gatherings, commerce, and communication between ethnic groups (Swahili as lingua franca). Swahili has been the national language and the official medium of communication at the primary level and in principle; the mother tongues including Alagwa are restricted to informal domains (Kibogoya, 1995; Msanjila, 2003). The development of media like radio, television, and mobile phones and intermarriages (among Alagwa, Rangi, and others) have all contributed to secure Swahili as the language through which this community view the world outside (cf. Harvey & Mreta, 2016). This is witnessed in types of loanwords entered into Alagwa in which almost all modern concepts are expressed by Swahili loans. These have resulted in the frequent penetration of Swahili terms for both core and cultural borrowing into Alagwa. It is observed that in Alagwa families almost all children and majority of youngsters speak Swahili at home than Alagwa. As a result, the language faces challenges to remain a spoken tongue (by few old members) into the next century because of being encroached by Swahili and Arabic (a medium of communication in mosques and madrasa where Alagwa is strictly restricted). Virtually, all the Alagwa are bilingual and/or multilingual, while

the majority of children and youngsters are Swahili native speakers. This motivates the transfer of foreign or exotic phonemes. Having numerous wider communication domains, Kiswahili is the source of loanwords for the new concepts to most ECLs in Tanzania, including Alagwa.

In the light of contact between the two languages, this work aims to examine the way Swahili loanwords are both adapted and adopted, based on assimilation and direct phonological diffusion frameworks (Campbel, 1998). In the former, the non-native phonemes are modified to resemble the phonological patterns of the Alagwa, while in the latter, the foreign phonemes are transferred to the language along with Swahili loanwords. Direct phonological diffusion according to Campbell (1998) occurs in the situation of intimate and long-term contact which alters the phonemic inventory of Alagwa. The current study is based only on lexical borrowing from Swahili, although Alagwa was in long term contact with Rangi (their close Bantu neighbour), Barabaig, Gorwaa, Sandawe, and Arabic (through Islamic religion which is dominant in the area), because Swahili is currently the language from which Alagwa like other ECLs mostly borrow numerous words. That being the case, this study offers an account of how Swahili loanwords are incorporated and imported into Alagwa phonological patterns. Thus, this work contributes to the understanding of the vitality of the Alagwa language in the apparent contact situation with Swahili. The remaining part of the paper presents a short description of Alagwa and methodological procedures. Further, the paper analyses and discusses data used in this study based on loanwords' adaptation and adoption into the phonology of Alagwa language.

2. Methodology

This work investigates 520 loanwords from Swahili into Alagwa, which were either collected from Mous (2016) or from the fieldwork conducted between 2019 and 2020. The fieldwork which involved

observation and elicitation was conducted in purposively selected villages of Humai, Thawi (Tlawi), and Kwa Dinu. Oral elicitation involved 15 informants of different age, sex, and level of educational backgrounds. In the course of data collection, loanwords are compared with their etymons, with the focus being on phonological adaption and adoption strategies. The aim is to scrutinize mechanisms used to integrate the non-native phonemes; and the exotic phonemes that are transferred along with loanwords. This is based on the argument that the loanword either has to be incorporated into the phonology of the recipient language, or can be imported to the same phonological pattern along with its features (Andersson, Sayeed, & Vaux, 2015 & Coetsem, 2016; Campbell, 1998).

3. Results and Discussion

This section presents qualitative analysis and discussion of data on both adaptation strategies and adoption of new features of Swahili loanwords into Alagwa. It first accounts for an overview of Alagwa and Swahili phonology, the aim being to determine what consonant and vowel sounds form the Alagwa inventory; and the Swahili loan features that have been assimilated as well as new features introduced into Alagwa along with loanwords.

3.1. Phonemes Inventory

In terms of the number and quality of vowels, Swahili and Alagwa show similarities. Both languages possess five-vowel system of [a], [e], [i], [o], [u] and a set of contrastive long vowels. However, Alagwa has two diphthongs /ai/ and /au/. Swahili may be described as having a (C)V syllable structure while Alagwa has a CV(C) syllable. In both languages, V may hold the value of one timing unit or two-timing units (Harvey & Mreta, 2016). The two languages show distinction in syllable

structure. Based on consonants, Mous (2016) asserts that Alagwa distinguishes seven places of articulation for consonants, namely labial, alveolar, palatal, velar (and rounded velar), uvular (and rounded uvular), pharyngeal and glottal; only stops show voice opposition. The analysis of data follows the phonological description by Mous (2016) since there is neither official nor unofficial orthography for this language. Table 1 presents a phonemic inventory of Alagwa consonants.

Table 1: Alagwa Consonant Phonemes Inventory

	labial	alveolar	palatal	velar	rounded velar	uvular	rounded uvular	pharyngeal	glottal
Stops	<i>p b</i>	<i>t d</i>	<i>tʃ ʃ</i>	<i>k g</i>	<i>kw gw</i>	<i>q</i>	<i>qw</i>		<i>ʔ</i>
Nasals	<i>m</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>ɲ</i>	<i>ŋ</i>					
Liquid	<i>l</i>								
Trill		<i>r</i>							
Fricatives	<i>f</i>	<i>s</i>		<i>x</i>	<i>xw</i>			<i>ħ</i>	<i>ʕ</i> <i>h</i>
Ejective Affricate		<i>ts'</i>	<i>tʃ'</i>						
Lateral fricative		<i>ɬ</i>							
Glide	<i>w</i>		<i>j</i>						

As depicted in Table 1, the Alagwa consonant system is rich, containing series of rounded velar /kw, gw, xw/ and uvular /qw/, ejectives /ts', tʃ'/, a lateral fricative /ɬ/, pharyngeal (voiceless fricative /ħ/ and voiced stop plus fricative /ʕ/ as well as glottal stop /ʔ/). Although Alagwa shows a one-to-one correspondence between its phonemes and orthography, there are nine consonants sounds which lack such correspondence as presented below.

Table 2: Consonants phonemes which lack correspondence with orthography

Phoneme	Orthography	example	gloss
/j/	<i>j</i>	[njad]	‘two’
/ʃ/	/	[ʃa:]	‘cry’
/ʔ/	’	[doʔo]	‘house’
/tʃ/	<i>ch</i>	[tʃa:ja]	‘salt’
/ɲ/	<i>ny</i>	[ɲaraw]	‘scorpion’
/ʎ/	<i>sl</i>	[ʎagwaj]	‘spoon’
/tʌ/	<i>tl</i>	[tʌbaj]	‘rain’
/h/	<i>hh</i>	[ha:la]	‘well’

The palatals /j/, /ɲ/, and /tʃ/ are rare in Alagwa, as the main feature in loanwords from Swahili, Rangi, or from unspecified Bantu sources. For instance, *chay* ‘tea’ from Swahili, *monjo* ‘jackal’ from Rangi language. However, some non-loan words, (e.g. *neeja* ‘well, very good’, *unjuwaali* ‘animal sp.’) have palatal consonants. The presence of palatals results from borrowing from unspecified Bantu sources (*chaapu* ‘jiggers’), irregular retention (e.g. *njad* ‘two’ and *nyaraw* ‘scorpion’), and an innovation of Alagwa (e.g. *tumbujim* ‘to swim’), according to Mous (2016). In most cases, the presence of palatals might have resulted from the diachronic assimilation process in which the borrowing took place back in time concerning sounds that did not exist, while the contemporary adoption is regarded as a synchronic process (Sitali-Mubanga, 2018). In this line, Batibo (1996) argues that contemporary borrowings from English have introduced foreign consonant clusters into the language.

In contrast, Swahili has 31 consonant phonemes, such as /p/, /b/, /t/, /d/, /j/, /k/, /g/, /m/, /n/, /ɲ/, /ŋ/, /tʃ/, /r/, /f/, /v/, /θ/, /ð/, /s/, /z/, /ʃ/, /x/, /ç/, /h/, /w/, /j/, /l/ (Shidiavai, 2015). From Swahili inventory, it is evident that the Alagwa which is the recipient language lacks /v/, /θ/, /ð/, /z/, /ʃ/, and /ç/. Swahili commonly features word initial syllable nasal consonant. Therefore, Swahili loanwords with any of

these sounds when borrowed, a speaker assimilates into the phonological systems by replacing the sound(s) with closely related native sounds. Sometimes loanwords with these are adopted with newly introduced phonemes.

3.2. Phonological Adaptation

This involves acclimating Swahili loanwords sounds fitting the phonological patterns of Alagwa; hence, loanwords acceptable and pronounceable in the system of Alagwa segmental phonology. Adaptation mechanisms involves nativisation of the loanwords' phonemes, syllable structure and phonotactic rules. This work reveals that some loan consonants and vowels borrowed along with loanwords get assimilated through the modification such as sounds' replacement or substitution, insertion, deletion, reduction, and lengthening.

3.2.1. Replacement of Non-native Phoneme

The replacement embraces substitution of Swahili loanwords sound by the closest counterpart in Alagwa sound for easy pronunciation. The analysis attested consonants and vowels substitution of some loanwords. In substitution, foreign sound segment is supplanted by different sounds that exist in the language. The analysis has revealed the substitution of consonant sounds which are not present in the phonetic inventory of Alagwa are obligatorily swapped by similar sounds from the native inventory. It also involves vowel substitution although both languages possess equal number of vowels which hold similar qualities.

3.2.1.1. Consonants Replacement

The fricative phonemes /z/ and /ð/ of the loanwords are commonly replaced with /s/ as illustrated in the following examples.

(1)

[zabibu]	[sabibu]	‘grapes’
[kazi]	[kasi:]	‘job’
[aðabu]	[asabu]	‘punishment’
[ðahabu]	[sahabu]	‘gold’

Consonant substitution involves devoicing of Swahili voiced alveolar fricative /z/ voiced dental fricative /ð/ merging to voiceless alveolar fricative /s/. This tendency is virtually found in elderly speakers’ speech.

Alagwa replace /v/ with /w/ and /f/. The common tendency is /v/ > /w/ as in word [vita > wita] ‘war’, [virasi < wirasi] ‘sweet potatoes’ and [dereva < derewa] ‘driver’. The change of loan phoneme /v/ to glide /w/ is known as lenition or weakening – a full consonant is replaced by a glide sound. The replacement of /v/ by /f/ might have been influenced by the contact with Gorwaa and Iraqw (Mous & Qorro, 2009; Harvey & Mreta, 2016).

However, while the elderly are adjusting loan sounds, the young speakers transfer the foreign sounds along with loanwords. Their speech exhibits /z/ instead of /s/ in [zabibu] ‘grapes’ and in [zawadi] ‘gift’ where the original /z/ is maintained, while /ð/ is replaced with /z/ in words like [dhahabu > zahabu] ‘gold’ and [adhabu > azabu] ‘punishment’. On the other hands, /v/ is maintained in words like, [vita], [dereva], and [votʃa] ‘voucher’.

Another case of sound replacement is realised in devoicing of Swahili voiced sounds as shown in the following words.

(2)

[barabara]	[palapala]	‘a road’
[bisibisi]	[pisipisi]	‘screwdriver’
[sigara]	[sikara]	‘cigarettes’
[begi]	[beji]	‘value’
[luya]	[luqa]	‘language’
[yarama]	[qarama]	‘cost’

As seen above, devoicing involves bilabial stop (from /b/ to /p/), velar fricative (from /ɣ/ to the voiceless uvular stop /q/), and velar stop (from /g/ to /k/). Palatalization is observed with voiced velar stop (from /g/ to /j/), voiced alveolar fricative (from /z/ to either /tʃ/ or /j/, as in [kanzu > kantʃo] ‘coat, robe’ and [mzungu > mujʊŋgu] ‘white person’, respectively).

Voicing of loanwords voiceless phonemes is seen as another case of replacement, whereby voiceless sounds in Swahili are pronounced as corresponding voiced sounds as illustrated herein.

(3)

[hospitali]	[sibitari]	‘hospital’
[kaptula]	[butula]	‘short’
[soksi]	[sogisi]	‘socks’
[sokota]	[sogotim]	‘twist’
[mkristu]	[girisitu]	‘Christian’
[blanketi]	[burungeti]	‘blanket’
[kitanda]	[gidanda]	‘bed’

As observed in the data, voicing involves bilabial stop (from /p/ to /b/), velar stop (from /k/ to /g/), and alveolar stop (/t/ to /d/), the last of which is however attested only in one word.

Alagwa has both /l/ and /r/ sound in its consonants phoneme inventory. In the analysis it was found that /l/ in some Swahili loanwords become realised as /r/ and the opposite replacement of /r/ by /l/ is also attested. Exemplified herein is /l/ replacement cases.

(4)

[baiskeli]	[basikeri]	‘bicycle’
[filimbi]	[firimbi]	‘whistle’
[hospitali]	[sibitari]	‘hospital’
[jela]	[jera]	‘jail’

But /l/ is maintained in other Swahili loanwords like [kalamu] ‘pen’, [kalenda] ‘calendar’, [kila] ‘each, every’, and [kilabu] ‘local alcohol club’.

Apart from /l/ > /r/, the analysis has also revealed the substitution of /r/ for /l/ as attested in a number of loanwords presented below.

(5)

[karaŋga]	[kalaŋga]	‘groundnuts’
[hereni]	[eleni]	‘earring’
[mɲyororo]	[mɲyololo]	‘chain’
[mgorori]	[mgololo]	‘bed sheet’

Another sound substitution is voiceless postalveolar fricative /ʃ/ for voiceless alveolar fricative /s/ in words which commonly found in the speech of rural elderly speakers, while the majority of speakers

adopt /f/ instead of /s/.

(6)

[dirifa]	[dirisa]/[dirifa]	‘window’
[difi]	[disi]/[difi]	‘dish’
[fundifa]	[fundisim]/[fundifim]	‘teach’
[fuka]	[suka]/[fuka]	‘bed sheet’
[jefi]	[jesi]/ [jefi]	‘army’

The observation revealed that sound /s/ is very hard to hear in the above loanwords. This implies that ʃ is being introduced into to the phoneme inventory of the language.

On the other hand, the voiceless dental fricative /θ/ is realised as voiceless alveolar fricative /s/ and voiceless velar stop /k/ is replaced by voiceless alveolar stop /t/ as demonstrated in the data below.

(7)

[hadiθi]	[hadisi]	‘story’
[θumuni]	[sumuni]	‘cent’
[θamani]	[samani]	‘value’
[karatasi]	[tartasi]	‘paper’

The substitution of /f/ and /θ/ by /s/ involves the change of the place of articulation i.e. /f/ > /s/ is the replacement of post-alveolar by alveolar and /θ/ > /s/ involves dental with alveolar. The replacement of /k/ in [karatasi > tartasi] ‘paper’ is irregular and infrequent, it might be resulted due to innovation.

Swahili loan-verbs have revealed irregular nativisation whereby the final vowel is replaced by a vowel followed by a nasal coda. This is clearly demonstrated in the following words.

(8)

[elewa]	[elew im]	‘understand’
[soma]	[som im]	‘learn, read’
[jilikana]	[julik im]	‘known’
[jibu]	[jib im]	‘answer’
[sali]	[sal im]	‘pray’

As seen, the final vowel of the Swahili verb is substituted by /im/, which is the imperfective suffix of Alagwa. This alternation pattern needs more precise morphological observation which is not part of this study.

Replacement is the most frequently used integration mechanism in Alagwa. However, substitution is more commonly observed in the speech of elderly rural speakers than younger speakers. This finding is in line with what Kasavaga and Alphonse (2021) have revealed in Hehe, that the assimilation of loanword sounds may be influenced by sociolinguistic factors such as age, education background, and degree of exposure to a donor language which resulted in bilingualism.

3.2.1.2. Vowel Replacement

In Swahili loanwords, vowels can also be substituted as exemplified below.

(9)

[serikali]	[sirikali]	‘government’
[beleʃi]	[biliʃi]	‘spade, shovel’
[maʃine]	[maʃini]	‘machine’
[bunduki]	[bunduka:]	‘gun’
[ɲundo]	[ɲondo]	‘hammer’
[θelaθini]	[salasini]	‘Thirty’
[mgorori]	[mgololo]	‘bed sheet’

Perhaps, in some cases, assimilation is also relevant here. For example /e/ > /i/ in *sirikali* seems to be affected by the following syllable /ri/, i.e., regressive assimilation, while the same process in /maʃini/ may be affected by the preceding syllable /ʃi/, i.e., progressive assimilation. On the other hand, the same vowel /e/ can be altered into /a/ when it is followed by a syllable with the vowel /a/, as in /θelaθini/ > /salasini/.

3.2.2. Vowel Reduction through Gliding

Swahili loanwords which contain diphthongs are assimilated by reducing them into a single vowel either followed or preceded by a glide, which may be /j/ or /w/ as shown below.

(10)

[gauni]	[gawni]	‘dress’
[barua]	[barwa]	‘letter’
[aina]	[ajna]	‘type or kind’
[sufuria]	[sufurja]	‘iron pot’
[bei]	[beji]	‘price’
[adui]	[aduj]	‘enemy’
[siasa]	[sijasa]	‘politics’
[matokeo]	[matokejo]	‘results’
[mkoa]	[mkowa]	‘region’
[kioo]	[kiwowo]	‘mirror’

As seen above, Swahili loan diphthongs are reduced to a possible combination of a glide and a single vowel; thus, /au/ > /aw/, /ua/ > /wa/, /ai/ > /aj/, /ia/ > /ja/, /oa/ > /wa/, /oi/ > /wo/ as indicated in data above.

3.2.3. Insertion of Sounds

This is also called epenthesis which is the insertion of a sound segment in any position in a word except for a word-initial position (Massamba, 2010). Speakers employ this to meet the phonotactic template of a matrix language (Mwita, 2009). In some case, borrowed words are constrained to follow the syllable structure of Alagwa language to be part of its system. The study reveals that both vowel and consonant insertions are observed in the loanword phonology of Alagwa.

3.2.3.1. Vowel Insertion

Alagwa tends to entrench vowels in consonant clusters to clear any bunch that violates its phonotactic constraint. The insertion of vowels is more frequent than consonant insertion because

majority of Swahili loanwords have consonant clusters which may not be tolerant in the phonotactics of Alagwa. This is clearly depicted in examples below.

(11)

[stempu]	[sitempu]	‘stamp’
[kaptula]	[kaputura]	‘short’
[boksi]	[bokisi]	‘box’
[askari]	[asikari]	‘police’
[blanketi]	[buruᅅgeti]	‘blanket’

Vowels are inserted to clear consonant clusters that violate the phonotactic rules of the language. The phonotactic rules constrain the clusters /st/, /pt/, /ks/, /sk/, and /bl/. That being the case, /i/ and /u/ are inserted to break consonant clusters to meet the phonotactic template. However, in some loanwords loan clusters are tolerated where they do not bring difficulties in pronunciation as in [bustani] ‘garden’ and [brafi] ‘bush’.

The analysis of the data shows that vowels are inserted after the nasal that occurs at the word-initial to clear the NC cluster. Vowel epenthesis creates a word-initial NV syllable (Harvey & Mreta, 2016) especially with a bilabial nasal /m/.

(12)

[mtʃango]	[mutʃango]	‘contribution’
[mtʃele]	[mutʃele]	‘rice cooked or uncooked’
[mkoba]	[mukoba]	‘bag’
[msumari]	[musumari]	‘nail’
[mteja]	[muteja]	‘customer’
[mnada]	[munada]	‘public market’

As seen in the above examples, the high back vowel /u/ is inserted after the syllabic nasal /m/. However, in other loanwords the initial syllabic nasal can be maintained as in [mpaka] ‘border’ and [mikutano] ‘meeting’, while in other cases the syllabic nasal may be dropped as in [mpaka > paka] ‘till’ and [mkristu > girisitu] ‘Christian’. On the other hand, only one case is observed where vowels are inserted word-initially, which is [nta > inta] ‘glue’. While the sample is quite limited, it seems that insertion of vowels is motivated by avoiding the word-initial NCV structure, which does not follow the syllable structure of Alagwa.

3.2.3.2. Consonant Insertion

The analysis also reveals the insertion of consonants at inter-vocalic positions. This is seen in the data below.

(13)

[mbaazi]	[mbalasi]	‘peas’
[tfooni]	[tforoni]	‘toilet’
[kaanga]	[kalanɡim]	‘fried’
[tʃuuza]	[tʃuruza]	‘sell’
[kituŋɡuu]	[kituŋɡuru]	‘onion’
[maabusu]	[maʔabusu]	‘lockup’
[kuruanu]	[kuruʃani]	‘Quran’
[ndoo]	[ndowo]	‘bucket’
[kioo]	[kiwowo]	‘mirror’
[baada]	[baʔada]	‘after’
[saa]	[saʔa]	‘clock, watch’

As seen from the data, different consonants are inserted between sequences of vowels of Swahili words. While it is less common, there are the cases where the word-initial consonant insertion is observed, e.g. [gazeti > ŋgaseti] ‘newspaper’. As seen in these cases, the consonant insertions are basically motivated to break vowel hiatus of the Swahili etymon.

3.2.4. Vowel Lengthening

Vowel lengthening is also attested in incorporation of Swahili loans as exemplified below.

(14)

[gari]	[ga:ri]	‘car’
[bunduki]	[bunduka:]	‘gun’
[tʃupa]	[tʃupa:]	‘bottle’
[kadi]	[kadi:]	‘card’
[kazi]	[kasi:] or [kazi:]	‘work’
[pete]	[pete:]	‘ring’
[kiti]	[kiti:]	‘chair’
[pitʃa]	[pitʃa:]	‘picture’
[mkanda]	[mukanda:]	‘belt’

As seen above, vowels are commonly lengthened at the word-final position. The condition for vowel lengthening is not straightforward: vowels can be lengthened in the first, penultimate, and final syllables. When adapted Swahili words are used in the context where word-final stress should be assigned, they can be pronounced with a lengthened final vowel, i.e., word-final stress can be repaired by vowel lengthening.

3.2.5. Deletion of Sound

The consonant deletion is what Harvey and Mreta (2016) regard as another strategy used to repair illegitimate syllabic nasals in the Swahili etymon. Deletion of consonants and vowels of the Kiswahili etymon is also attested as shown below.

(15)

[maandazi]	[mandasi] or [mandazi]	‘doughnut’
[katika]	[katkah]	‘in’
[karatasi]	[tartasi]	‘paper’
[kaptula]	[butula]	‘short’
[mkristu]	[girisitu]	‘Christian’
[pilau]	[plaw]	‘pilau’
[ruhusa]	[rusa]	‘permission’
[maɸarti]	[masati] or [maɸati]	‘obligation’
[taabu]	[tabu]	‘trouble’
[herein]	[eleni]	‘earring’

The observations in the data above show the deletion or the loss of vowels and consonants: the loss of vowels /a/, and /i/, which occur in the interior of words. Deletion also involves the loss of consonants such as voiceless velar stop /k/, bilabial nasal /m/, voiceless glottal fricative /h/, and alveolar trill /r/. Deletion of consonants occurs both in word-initial and word-internal positions.

3.2.6. Borrowing without Salient Modification

Some loanwords are borrowed into Alagwa without alteration of sound and syllable structure. Majority of these words follows the simple CV syllable structure.

(16)

[elimu]	[elimu]	‘education’
[benki]	[benki]	‘bank’
[hasa]	[hasa]	‘especially’
[kabisa]	[kabisa]	‘completely’
[sweta]	[sweta]	‘sweater’
[ndege]	[ndege]	‘bird, airplane’
[basi]	[basi]	‘bus’
[kikombe]	[kikombe]	‘cup’
[simu]	[simu]	‘phone’
[mpira]	[mpira]	‘ball’

It is striking that loanwords without phonological modification are well attested in both core and cultural borrowing. Cultural (basic) borrowing represents objects, concepts, or inventions which are new in Alagwa culture while core borrowing is the transfer of words which are not new. However, words without phonological modification are not fully nativized. In core borrowing, loanwords duplicate elements that the recipient language already has in its lexicon (Myers-Scotton, 2006). Core borrowings are likely to be used for prestige and higher social status (Sebonde, 2014) attached to a donor language by the recipient language speakers, the outcome being co-existence of both loan and native words or supplanting of native words. Example of core borrowing are [hasa] ‘especially’, and [kabisa] ‘completely’.

As seen in this section, Alagwa adapts Swahili loanwords using a different mechanism, all of which intend to make loanwords acceptable in the phonotactic rules of the language. Replacement of sounds, insertions, deletion, and reduction are attested as the major adaptation strategies. While majority of loanwords are adjusted to fit the phonological patterns of the language, some loanwords are adopted without altering their sounds, syllable structure and phonotactic patterns. These adoption patterns are

triggered by linguistic and sociolinguistic factors as presented in the preceding sections. What follows is the description of the process of adoption.

3.3. Adoption of Non-Native Phonological Features: Direct phonological diffusion

In Alagwa, some Swahili loanwords are transferred with their phonological features such as sounds, syllable structure, and phonotactic pattern which are not part of Alagwa phonological patterns. That is sounds that are not present (that are considered exotic or foreign) in Alagwa are adopted outright through loanwords. The adoption is found to be less common than the adaptation or assimilation of non-native phonemes. The adoption of exotic sounds happened at different times in Alagwa. There are sounds that enter the language in the early time of language contact which is currently part of the language phoneme inventory. Such sounds are voiced palatal stop /ɟ/, voiceless palatal affricate /tʃ/, and palatal nasal /ɲ/ as exemplified below in loanwords collected from Mous (2016). These sounds are rare and mainly occur in loanwords from Swahili (Sw), Rangi (Ra), and unspecified Bantu language (cf. Mous, 2016).

(17)

[tʃaj]	[tʃai]	< Sw	‘tea’
[kabitʃi]	[kabitʃi]	< Sw	‘cabbage’
[inja:nda]	[inja:nta]	< Ra	‘hunger’
[ɲuri]	[ɲuri]	< Ra	‘elephant shrew’
[pɲo]	[pɲu]	< Ra	‘hornless’

From the data, it is evident that Alagwa transfers loanwords from Rangi the closest Bantu language spoken in the same geographical area. So, the two languages have been in contact for more than a century and, as a result, some of Rangi's phonological patterns were absorbed in Alagwa and vice versa.

However, the focus of this work is on Swahili loanwords and their influence on the phonological patterns of the language. The analysis has revealed the adoption of some Swahili sounds and phonotactics. This is in line with Campbell's (1998) concept of direct phonological diffusion that lexical borrowing transfers phonological aspects of the donor language into the recipient language phonology – which is triggered by prolonged, intimate, and long-term contacts between the two languages. That being the case, there must be a gap in the phoneme inventory of the language – so the gap attracts the sounds. The analysis of the current data has revealed the adoption of some sounds which are on the way to full nativization as Batibo (1996) argues that recent borrowings from English have introduced consonant clusters in Tswana and Swahili, in the same line Harvey (2015) adds that it is still uncertain as to where the said borrowings can be said as fully native. Borrowing from English into Alagwa has passed directly and/or indirectly through Swahili, as examined herein.

(18)

[bahaʃa]	[bahafa]	‘envelope’
[fundifa]	[fundifim] or [fundifaʃim]	‘teach’
[ðambi]	[zambi]	‘sin’
[ðahabu]	[zahabu]	‘grape’
[vikombe]	[vikombe]	‘cups’
[votʃa]	[vo:tʃa]	‘airtime, voucher’
[viongozi]	[viongoz(s)i]	‘leaders’
[meza]	[meza]	‘table’
[nazi]	[nazi]	‘coconut’

As depicted in the loanwords, sounds which are not present in Alagwa sound systems are adopted in the recent borrowings. Adoption situation is less common than the adaptation of non-native phonemes.

Transfer of loan sounds frequently occurs with the voiceless alveopalatal fricative /ʃ/, voiced labial fricative /v/, and voiced alveolar fricative /z/. The chart below captures three adopted consonants.

Table 3: Current Alagwa Consonant Phonemes Inventory

	labial	alveolar	palatal	velar	rounded velar	uvular	rounded uvular	pharyngeal	glottal
Stops	<i>p b</i>	<i>t d</i>	<i>tʃ ʃ</i>	<i>k g</i>	<i>kw gw</i>	<i>q</i>	<i>qw</i>		ʔ
Nasals	<i>m</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>ɲ</i>	<i>ŋ</i>					
Liquid	<i>l</i>								
Trill		<i>r</i>							
Fricatives	<i>f v</i>	<i>s z</i>	<i>ʃ</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>xw</i>			<i>ħ</i>	ʕ <i>h</i>
Affricate		<i>ts'</i>	<i>tʃ'</i>						
Lateral affricate		<i>ɬ</i>							
Glide	<i>w</i>		<i>j</i>						

As a result of borrowings, the phoneme inventory of Alagwa hosts 3 loan consonants, /ʃ, v, z/. These sounds are clearly heard in the speech of native speakers – the reason for transfer being the long-term contact that expose the speakers to Swahili for more than a century. This period is sufficient for a sound of a dominant language to enter the phonological system of the recipient language – Alagwa through lexical borrowings. Another factor being the existence of the phonological gaps in the inventory which motivates the adoption. Additionally, this work has revealed the adoption of foreign clusters which has an obvious implication in the syllable structure, as shown below.

(19)

[daftari]	[daftari]	‘exercise book’
[labda]	[labda]	‘may be’
[mbao]	[mbao]	‘wood’
[ploti]	[ploti]	‘plot’
[plasitiki]	[plasitiki]	‘plastic’
[padre]	[padri]	‘priest’

It is evident that these clusters have paved their way to Alagwa vis Swahili loanwords. This suggests that the Swahili clusters of consonants *pl*, *dr*, *ft*, and *mb* (historically Alagwa lacks an initial syllabic nasal) have been borrowed along with loanwords, which in turn motivate to introduce new phonotactics or syllable structures. The adoption of foreign sound through borrowings occurs cross-linguistically, although the possible processes may vary from one language to another. For instance, English adopted /ð/, /v/, and /z/ (Minkova, 2013), Hehe received /r/, /z/, /ʃ/, /ð/, /θ/ and /dʒ/ from English loanwords (Kasavaga & Alphonce, 2021), and Iraqw and Gorwaa received /ʃ/, /z/ and /tʃ/ from Swahili (Harvey & Mreta, 2016). This is an indication that adoption is a cross linguistic phenomenon. It is said that the adoption of new sound into the phoneme inventory of the recipient is motivated by a linguistic factor (presence of the gap in the phoneme inventory of the recipient language) and sociolinguistics reasons, namely speakers’ age, level of education, level of bilingualism which may be affected by the length of the period of exposure or contact to a donor language (cf. Kasavaga & Alphonce, 2021). This is in line with Haspelmath (2009) who admits that speakers' age and degree of bilingualism may affect lexical borrowing and its influence can be experienced in the phonetic, semantic, and other aspects of the recipient language like morphology, syntax, and discourse.

In contrast to situations in which non-native phonemes are replaced by native phonemes, these non-

native phonemes seem to be adopted because there are no naturally similar phonemes in the Alagwa phonemic inventory which sufficiently approximate the Swahili phonemes. There are cases where Alagwa makes use of the sounds of both loans and native words. This is commonly observed in loanwords with non-native sounds. Alagwa does not have sounds such as /z, v, ʃ/ which are currently becoming common as they have entered the phoneme inventory of Alagwa. Older members which are now vanishing in the Alagwa community are the ones using the older sounds. It is informative to say that borrowings result in the introduction of foreign sounds into Alagwa. Thus, gaps in the phonemic patterns of language tend to be filled by the change in phonemic value or in structural interpretation or both, of closely related phonemes of borrowing from another dialect of foreign language (Furgason, 2015). Campbell (1998) argues that in the situation of more extensive, long-term, or intimate contact, new phonemes can be introduced into the recipient language together with loanwords that contain these new sounds, resulting in filling gaps in phonemic gaps. Thus, sounds such as /ʃ, v, z/ are evidenced in recent borrowings, hence, a change in the phonemic value of Alagwa. The major reason for taking these foreign sounds is the rise of the level of proficiency in Kiswahili. The majority of Alagwa speakers are bilingual in Alagwa and Kiswahili, hence, familiar with the pronunciation.

4. Conclusion

This paper has analysed the Swahili loanwords and in particular the integration and adoption of loanwords along with their phonological patterns. It is evident that the majority of the loanwords sounds are adjusted to native phonemes through replacement, insertion, deletion, vowel reduction, and vowel lengthening to secure the recipient language's phonotactic rule. On the other hand, in some cases the foreign sounds and clusters are tolerated, and thus affecting the phonological features of the language.

This is referred to as direct phonological diffusion which occurs in the situation of intimate and/or long-term contact (termed as the degree of exposure which is the necessary foundation for bilingualism which in turn motivated borrowing) between Swahili and Alagwa. Other sociolinguistic factors are age, level of education, and social status. The existence of the gaps in the system of consonants triggered the transfer of 6 consonant phonemes in different waves of borrowings. Previous borrowings had introduced /tʃ/, /j/ and /ɲ/ while the recent borrowings brought /ʃ/, /z/ and /v/ which affects the reorganisation of the phonemic inventory. While elderly speakers' (especially those who are less conversant in Swahili) speech favoured nativization of loan phonemes, the children and young speakers preferred adoption as a result of exposure to Swahili through education resulted in the development of bilingualism. Since this work focuses on phonological observation, it should be mentioned that further investigation of the loanwords in Alagwa from different approaches dealing with the morphosyntactic, semantic and discourse-related aspects will shed new lights to better understand the historical process and dynamic relationship with Swahili as a lingua franca as well as other neighboring languages in contact.

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Clues about functional development of the Kimakunduchi copula

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Abstract

The Kimakunduchi dialect of Swahili has the verb *-wa*, derived from the Proto-Bantu **-bá* ‘dwell, be, become’. Several functional features of *-wa* in the perfective form can consistently be construed as clues to the gradual development of this form from a locative predicate into a general copula. This article aims to describe such features and provide a new perspective on the functional development of copular verbs in Bantu languages.

Key words

Swahili, Kimakunduchi, functional development of copulas, functional development of existential/locative predicates

1. Introduction

Cross-linguistically, posture and/or locative verbs tend to develop into general copulas (Faverey et al. 1976, Devitt 1990, Hengeveld 1992). Various Swahili varieties are also likely to follow this tendency.

For example, Standard Swahili¹ has the locative copula composed of the subject prefix and the

¹ The term ‘Standard Swahili’ generally refers to the prescriptive variety of Swahili that is based on Kiunguja, originally the local dialect of Zanzibar City and environs, spoken on the west coast of Unguja (Whiteley 1969:

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morpheme *-ko*, which can be analysed as the locative enclitic of class 17.² This copula primarily functions to predicate the location of the referent of the subject with locative noun phrases, as shown in (1).³

(1) Standard Swahili (Ashton 1947: 329)

yu-ko nje [locative noun phrase]

SM1-COP outside

'He is outside'.

The functional range of the cognate copula is wider in so-called Western Swahili, the regiolects of Swahili in DR Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, and parts of Uganda (Nassenstein & Shinagawa 2019). In these regional varieties, the form derived from the Standard Swahili locative copula can function not only to introduce the location of the subject referent, but also to ascribe its property together with adjectives and non-locative noun phrases, as examples from Kisangani Swahili show in (2).

79ff., Nurse & Hinnebusch 1993: 12). Here this term is used to refer to data collected from previous published studies on (Standard) Swahili.

² Nouns in Kimakunduchi are categorised into several noun classes. I follow the classification of Standard Swahili, which differentiates noun classes numbered from 1 to 18 (except 12–14) (Meinhof 1932: 128). Modifiers change their form according to the noun class of their head nouns, whereas verbs can be marked with the subject and object prefixes which alternate according to the noun classes of the subject and object nouns, respectively. In the glosses of nouns and modifiers, noun class information is primarily provided to show the agreement relationship; more precisely, the noun class information of the demonstrative and the subject and object prefixes is always noted; in contrast, when nouns and other modifiers lack correspondent(s) (e.g. head nouns, modifiers, and verbs), their noun class information is omitted. The noun class information is glossed using only the numbers. While the first and second persons are represented by numbers 1 and 2 in the same manner as classes 1 and 2, unlike the class numbers, they appear together with SG or PL. Classes 16, 17, and 18 are the so-called locative classes, and are associated with the concept of place.

³ Examples are transcribed using the orthography of Standard Swahili with the following modifications: aspiration is marked with the IPA symbol, the first characters of sentences and proper nouns are written in lower case, periods are not added at the end of sentences, and morpheme boundaries are signalled by hyphens. Examples are, unless otherwise noted, from native speakers, who are listed in the acknowledgements. The glossing conventions primarily follow the Leipzig Glossing Rules. The transcriptions of examples from previous studies have been modified to align with the format of this article.

(2) Kisangani Swahili (Nassenstein 2015: 60, 63, 76)

a. engine shamba i-ko kule [locative noun phrase]

other field SM-COP there

‘Another field is there (far)’.

b. nyele yake i-ko muzuri [adjective]

9.hair her/his.9 SM-COP good

‘Her/his hair(style) is nice’.

c. ule mutu i-ko mulozi [attributive noun phrase]

DEM.DIST.1 1.person SM-COP 1.witchdoctor

‘That person is a witchdoctor’.

The gap between Standard Swahili and Western Swahili allows us to consider that the locative copula has expanded its functional range in accordance with the spread of Swahili in the western periphery (cf. Heine & Kuteva 2002).

The Kimakunduchi dialect of Swahili lacks the locative copula.⁴ To introduce the present location of the referent of the subject, Kimakunduchi uses a form composed of the subject prefix and the verb -*wa* (henceforth, the *wa*-copula),⁵ as can be seen in (3). A remarkable point is that the *wa*-copula, translated as ‘am’, ‘is’, and ‘are’ by a Kimakunduchi native speaker (Chum 1962/3: 66), additionally

⁴ Similar language varieties in the coastal areas of East Africa are assumed to be genetically closely related and categorised as Swahili dialects. Kimakunduchi, also known as Kikae and Kihadimu, is one such dialect. The speakers mainly inhabit the southeastern part of Unguja (where Makunduchi District is located), the largest island of the Zanzibar archipelago in Tanzania.

⁵ The Kimakunduchi verb -*wa* derives from the Proto-Bantu *-bá ‘dwell, be, become’ (Bastin et al. 2002)

functions to express the property of the subject referent as in (4). In Standard Swahili, the invariable copula *ni*, not the locative copula, is used in the same context (5). In sum, the Kimakunduchi *wa*-copula encompasses a broader functional range than the locative copula and the invariable copula in Standard Swahili.

(3) Kimakunduchi

ka-wa kiambo-ni vao
SM1-COP.PFV village-16.LOC their.16
‘He is in their village’.

(4) Kimakunduchi (Issa 2018: 77)

ka-wa mwana ya vivyo kwa vivyo
SM1-COP.PFV 1.child CONN.1 DEM.MED.8 CONN.17 DEM.MED.8
‘S/he is an extramarital child’. (Lit. ‘S/he is a child of here and there’.)

(5) Standard Swahili (Ashton 1947: 92)

hamisi ni mpishi
1.PN COP 1.cook
‘Hamisi is a cook’.

Considering the above-mentioned cross-linguistic tendency, Furumoto (2015) has argued that the *wa*-copula, which originally functioned simply to predicate the location, has secondarily acquired its non-locative use. It is difficult to back up this argument based on the formal feature of the *wa*-copula, in contrast to the copula in western varieties, which can easily be traced back to the locative copula in

Standard Swahili. However, several clues suggest that the *wa*-copula has changed its functional range. While some of them have already been introduced in Furumoto (2015), additional findings also support that the Kimakunduchi *wa*-copula has acquired current uses as a result of functional change. Furthermore, assuming diachronic development, some synchronic features enable us to describe a scenario in which the *wa*-copula has gradually changed its function. This article aims to summarise the morphosyntactic characteristics of the *wa*-copula, which potentially facilitate the investigation of the functional development process of copulas in Bantu languages.

The remainder of the article is structured as follows: Section 2 elucidates that the *wa*-copula is inflected in the perfective form. Section 3 describes the morphosyntactic characteristics which suggest that the *wa*-copula has undergone functional expansion. Section 4 introduces a possible trigger for the functional development. Section 5 concludes the article with a brief suggestion for the cross-linguistic investigation of copulas in Bantu languages.

2. The TAM marking of the *wa*-copula

While it is well known that Kimakunduchi has an inflectional form which I label ‘perfective’ (see also Furumoto 2019, 2020), the *wa*-copula has not necessarily been associated with this inflection in previous descriptions (cf. Whiteley 1959, Racine-Issa 2002). This is probably due to the deceptive formal feature of the *wa*-copula, which is described below.

In Kimakunduchi, a TAM (tense-aspect-mood) prefix such as future *cha-* in (6a) accompanies the finite form of verbs in most cases. However, this does not hold for the perfective form, which is characterised by so-called vowel copying (cf. Nurse 2008) and absence of a TAM prefix. When accompanied by a TAM prefix, non-borrowed verbs always end with the vowel *-a*. In contrast, when

vowel copying is applied, the same vowel as the penultimate syllable of the stem appears as the final vowel, as can be seen in (6b).

(6) Kimakunduchi

a. ka-cha-soma

SM1-FUT-study

‘S/he will study’.

b. ka-somo

SM1-study.PFV

‘S/he studied’.

Unlike multisyllabic verbs such as *-soma* ‘study’ in (6), vowel copying is, at least on the surface, not applied to certain monosyllabic verbs such as *-ja* ‘come’ in (7). The verb *-wa* inflects in the same way as *-ja*, as can be seen in (8). This similarity suggests that the *wa*-copula is inflected in the perfective form (see also Furumoto 2015: 22–23).

(7) Kimakunduchi

a. ka-cha-ja vano

SM1-FUT-come DEM.PROX.16

‘S/he will come here’.

b. ka-ja vano

SM1-come.PFV DEM.PROX.16

‘S/he came here’.

(8) Kimakunduchi

a. ka-cha-wa vano

SM1-FUT-COP DEM.PROX.16

‘S/he will be here’.

b. ka-wa vano

SM1-COP.PFV DEM.PROX.16

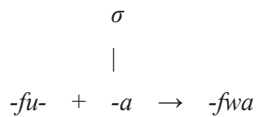
‘S/he is here’.

More precisely, verbs that can be schematised as *-Ca* (*C* represents consonants) (e.g. *-ja* ‘come’, *-k^ha* ‘give’) appear in the same form in the context where other verbs change their stems through vowel copying. The verb *-wa* is analysed as a verb of this type. Unlike *-Ca* verbs, other monosyllabic verb stems, when accompanied by a TAM prefix, include the semivowel *w* or *y* [j] in the internal position and end with *-a*. The perfective stems of such *-Cwa* and *-Cya* verbs (e.g. *-fwa* ‘die’, *-gwa* ‘fall’, *-pwa* ‘ebb’, *-lya* ‘eat’, *-nya* ‘rain, defaecate’) can be schematically generalised as *-Cu* and *-Ci*, respectively. Assuming that verb stems are formed through concatenation of the final vowel, the stem formation of monosyllabic verbs can be explained as follows: when the final vowel *-a* is attached to stems, the penultimate vowel related to vowel copy emerges as a semivowel because it is not syllabic underlyingly, as (9a) demonstrates; when vowel copy is applied, the penultimate vowel does not surface because of phonotactic constraint which prohibits the successions such as *wu* and *yi* (9b). In this analysis, the

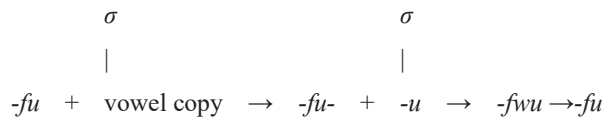
penultimate vowel of *-Ca* verbs does not surface in any form due to the similar phonotactic rule. In contrast to monosyllabic verbs, the penultimate vowel of multisyllabic verbs is assumed to be syllabic, as shown in (10).

(9) Possible formation of stems of *-fwa* ‘die’

a. *-fwa* (*-Cwa* stem)

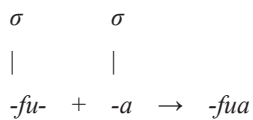


b. *-fu* (*-Cu* stem)

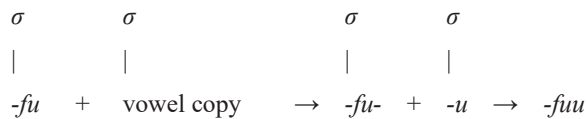


(10) Possible formation of stems of *-fua* ‘wash’

a. *-fua*



b. *-fuu* (vowel-copied stem)



Most verbs, such as *-soma* ‘study’, express completed situations when inflected in the perfective forms. In contrast, the *wa*-copula, which is also analysed as the perfective form, functions to express

present states. This gap stems from the difference in lexical aspect. The verb *-wa* is classified as a resultative verb, which encodes present states in the perfective forms. Thus, the aspectual feature of the *wa*-copula does not conflict with the analysis that the *wa*-copula is inflected in the perfective form.

The aspectual feature of *-wa* can be confirmed by its relativised form. In Kimakunduchi, relative clauses are formed through the prefixation of the verb. When verbs are accompanied by the relative clause prefix *m-* (*~mw-*), perfective-marking is realised not by vowel-copying, but by the prefix *a-*. When prefixed with *a-*, the verb *-wa* expresses a present state, as can be seen in (11). This observation supports that the present state denoted by the *wa*-copula is a result of a combination of the lexical aspect of *-wa* and the aspectual value of the perfective form.⁶ The aspectual feature of the *wa*-copula is discussed in detail in Section 3.4.

(11) Kimakunduchi

mw-a-wa nyumba-ni sasa nani

REL.SM1-PFV-COP house-LOC now who

‘Who is the one (person) that is at home now?’

3. Clues about functional expansion of the *wa*-copula

Below, I describe the functional features of the *wa*-copula. While they appear to be unrelated to each other, they are consistent with the argument that the *wa*-copula has taken a path from a locative to

⁶ Issa (2018: 31), a Kimakunduchi native speaker translates the *wa*-copula into Standard Swahili using the TAM prefix *me-*. Considering that the *me*-marked form in Standard Swahili encodes perfectivity in a parallel way to the Kimakunduchi vowel copied form (Furumoto 2019), Issa’s intuitive translation also appears to support that the *wa*-copula is inflected in the perfective form of the verb *-wa*.

a general copula.

3.1. The restriction on the non-locative use of the *wa*-copula

The Kimakunduchi copula can be followed by (non-locative) noun phrases denoting properties (such as professions) of the subject, as shown in (12).

(12) Kimakunduchi

juma ka-wa mwalimu

1.PN SM1-COP.PFV teacher

‘Juma is a teacher’.

In contrast, when noun phrases identify the referent of the subject, they cannot co-occur with the *wa*-copula (13).

(13) Kimakunduchi (Furumoto 2015: 28)

A: tunda lino tunda gani

5.fruit DEM.PROX.5 5.fruit what.kind.of

‘What kind of fruit is this (fruit)?’

B: lino fenesi

DEM.PROX.5 5.jackfruit

‘This is a jackfruit’.

B': *lino li-wa fenesi
 DEM.PROX.5 SM5-COP.PFV jackfruit
 Intended: 'This is a jackfruit'.

It has been reported that in languages unrelated to each other, copulas and copula-like items derived from locative and posture verbs are employed to ascribe the properties and attributes of the subject referent but are not used for identification (e.g. Verhaar 1995: 81, Goddard & Harkins 2002: 229-231, Noonan & Grunow-Hårsta 2002: 88, Reid 2002: 246). If this tendency can be attributed to the original semantics of locative and posture verbs, the restriction on the non-locational use of the *wa*-copula can be interpreted as suggesting that the *wa*-copula is derived from a locative verb (see also Furumoto 2015).

3.2. The functional gap between Kimakunduchi and Kitumbatu

While the *wa*-copula is used in the Kitumbatu dialect of Swahili,⁷ its functional range is not the same as in Kimakunduchi. In Kitumbatu, it can be followed by locative noun phrases (14a), but not by attributive noun phrases (14b).

⁷ Kitumbatu is spoken by people on Tumbatu Island, off the northwest tip of Unguja, as well as by the ancestors of Tumbatu immigrants in northern Unguja. The linguistic characteristics as well as the geographical closeness appear to suggest that Kimakunduchi and Kitumbatu are genetically closely related (see also Whiteley 1959, Nurse & Hinnebusch 1993).

(14) Kitumbatu

a. ka-wa nyumba-ni

SM1-COP.PFV house-LOC

‘S/he is at home’.

b. *ka-wa mwalimu

SM1-COP.PFV teacher

Intended: ‘S/he is a teacher’.

The gap between the two dialects is also compatible with the proposal that the *wa*-copula has secondarily acquired non-locational use in Kimakunduchi. In this view, Kimakunduchi is located at a later stage of the functional expansion of the *wa*-copula than Kitumbatu.

3.3. Irregularity of the first and second-person subject forms

In general, the *wa*-copula in Kitumbatu, unlike in Kimakunduchi, cannot be followed by attributive noun phrases (see Section 3.2). However, this is not the case when the subject is first or second person, as shown in (15).

(15) Kitumbatu

a. ni-wa mwalimu

SM1SG-COP.PFV teacher

‘I am a teacher’.

b. ku-wa mwalimu

SM2SG-COP.PFV teacher

‘You are a teacher’.

Assuming the gradualness of functional change, the irregularity of the first- and second-person subject forms appear to indicate that the Kitumbatu *wa*-copula is also in the process of expanding its functional range. In other words, this irregularity can also be interpreted as a trace of functional development. Furthermore, if this analysis is appropriate, it turns out that the change tends to start with the first and second-person subject forms.

Similarly, the Kimakunduchi *wa*-copula also shows some irregularity when the subject is first or second person. When the subject is third person, it is not preferred to use the *wa*-copula together with personal names, as in (16). This dispreference is in line with the generalisation that the *wa*-copula cannot be used for identification (see §3.1), considering that personal names can be used to identify the referent of the subject.⁸

(16) Kimakunduchi

?ka-wa juma

SM1-COP.PFV PN

Intended: ‘He is Juma’.

⁸ According to an informant of this study, when personal names are used together with the third person forms of the *wa*-copula, they are interpreted as profession names; example (16) was not preferred because of the gap between the actual meaning of the personal name *juma* and its appropriate reading induced by the morphosyntactic structure.

However, expressions like (17), which are often used in telephone conversations, are acceptable; when the subject is first or second person, the *wa*-copula can be used for identification in some cases.

(17) Kimakunduchi (Furumoto 2015: 29)

A: weye ku-wa nani

PRO.2SG SM2SG-COP.PFV who

‘Who are you?’

B: mie nyi-wa hidaya

PRO.1SG SM1SG-COP.PFV PN

‘I am Hidaya’.

Assuming that after acquiring the attributive use, locative and posture verbs develop to cover identification, the irregularity in Kimakunduchi also supports that the first and second-person subject forms of the *wa*-copula tend to undergo a functional change earlier than the third-person forms.

3.4. Coding of temporariness

In Kimakunduchi, juxtaposing two noun phrases is also a possible way of forming copular clauses. Possessive expressions such as *yangu* ‘mine’ in (18) do not necessarily require the *wa*-copula. However, this does not necessarily mean that the *wa*-copula has no semantic effect. According to an informant of this study, when the *wa*-copula occurs, it is implied that the referent of the subject has begun to be possessed recently. This explanation suggests that the *wa*-copula encodes temporariness.

(18) Kimakunduchi

a. yuno ng'ombe yangu

DEM.PROX.1 1.cow my.1

b. yuno ng'ombe ka-wa yangu

DEM.PROX.1 1.cow SM1-COP.PFV my.1

'This cow is mine'.

Devitt (1990) has indicated that cross-linguistically, copulas derived from posture and locative verbs tend to encode temporariness (see also Faverey et al. 1976: 89, Verhaar 1995: 83). This cross-linguistic tendency considered, encoding of temporariness may also support that the *wa*-copula was only used for locational predication.

It should however be noted that the temporariness of the *wa*-copula can be explained by its aspectual feature as well, and thus may not be associated with functional development. In Kimakunduchi, resultative verbs, listed in (19), express present states when inflected in the perfective forms. More precisely, resultative verbs in the perfective forms encode reversible resultative states which presuppose a preceding transition into the state in question (Furumoto & Gibson under review. cf. Dahl 1985: 133, Nedjalkov & Jaxontov 1988: 6). States expressed by resultative verbs can be construed as temporary because they obligatorily have both beginning and end points.

(19) Kimakunduchi resultative verbs

-chaga ‘get angry’, *-choka* ‘get tired’, *-dumba* ‘agree’, *-fwana* ‘please’,
-fanana ‘resemble’, *-furahi* ‘rejoice’, *-lewa* ‘get drunk’, *-kacha* ‘stiffen’,
-koswa ‘get annoyed, angry’, *-sahau* ‘forget’, *-shiba* ‘get full’,
-shugulika ‘get busy’, *-tulia* ‘get calm’, *-umia* ‘feel pain’,
-aga ‘get lost’, *-baki* ‘remain’, *-chanua* ‘bloom’, *-chuch^hama* ‘squat down’,
-chuch^hamia ‘stand on tiptoe’, *-egemea* ‘lean against’, *-enda* ‘go to’,
-funga ‘tie, close’, *-jaa* ‘fill’, *-ima* ‘stop’, *-kaa* ‘take a seat’, *-lala* ‘fall asleep’,
-tua ‘put’, *-uka* ‘leave’, *-uka wima* ‘stand’, *-vwaa* ‘put on (clothes)’

Kimakunduchi has a class of stative verbs, as summarised in (20). When inflected in the perfective forms, stative verbs express stable states, which appear to be more permanent than resultative states.

(20) Kimakunduchi stative verbs

-ijua ‘know’, *-kaza* ‘please (like)’, *-chukia* ‘displease (hate)’

If *-wa* were a stative, not a resultative, verb, it would be difficult to associate the temporariness of the *wa*-copula with its lexical aspect and TAM inflection. However, this possibility is eliminated by the imperfective prefix *na-*, which is compatible with resultative, but not with stative verbs (see also Furumoto & Gibson in prep.). As can be seen in (21), *-wa* can be combined with *na-*. This observation indicates that *-wa* is not a stative but resultative verb, which expresses a temporary state in the perfective forms.

(21) Kimakunduchi

kilamt^hu ka-na-wa mkongwe

every 1.person SM1-IPFV-COP old.1

‘Everybody gets old’.

4. A possible trigger of the change

Kimakunduchi, as well as Standard Swahili, has a class of items which can be labelled ‘adverbial adjectives’ (cf. Mpiranya 2015).⁹ Kimakunduchi adverbial adjectives are listed in (22).

(22) Kimakunduchi adverbial adjectives

fiti ‘healthy’, *hai* ‘alive’, *wazi* ‘open’, *kimya* ‘quiet’, *macho* ‘awake’,

uchi ‘naked’, *weka* ‘alone’, *wima* ‘upright’, *ch^hune* ‘topless’, *k^hundu* ‘dirty’

Kimakunduchi adverbial adjectives, unlike other adjectives, can adverbially modify verbal predicates (23), and mandatorily require a relativised copula verb when modifying nouns (24a, b).

⁹ The term ‘adverbial adjective’ is borrowed from Mpiranya (2015). Though Mpiranya (2015) distinguishes adverbial nouns from adverbial adjectives, I call both adverbial adjectives because they share the syntactic features and seem to constitute a single (word) class.

(23) Kimakunduchi (Furumoto 2015: 36)

nyoka ka-zikwa hai

1.snake SM1-bury.PASS.PFV alive

‘The snake was buried alive’.

(24) Kimakunduchi (Furumoto 2015: 36)

a. ke-me-guiya nyoka mw-a-wa hai

SM1-PRF-catch 1.snake REL.SM1-PFV-COP alive

‘S/he has caught a living snake’.

b. *ke-me-guiya nyoka hai

SM1-PRF-catch 1.snake alive

Intended: ‘S/he has caught a living snake’.

An important point is that Kimakunduchi adverbial adjectives such as *uchi* ‘naked’ in (25) obligatorily require the *wa*-copula for predication.

(25) Kimakunduchi

ka-wa uchi

SM1-COP.PFV naked

‘She is naked’.¹⁰

¹⁰ Example (15) is from a narrated story and the subject is female.

Most adverbial adjectives are loanwords or derivatives of nouns. This suggests that adverbial adjectives have been created relatively recently. Against this background, Furumoto (2015) proposes that the emergence of adverbial adjectives triggered a functional change in the *wa*-copula. In Standard Swahili, the locative copula is diverted to predication with adverbial adjectives, as in (26). This observation also suggests that the co-occurrence with adverbial adjectives has prompted the reanalysis of the *wa*-copula from a locative to a general copula.

(26) Standard Swahili (Mpiranya 2015: 156)

mtoto yu-ko uchi
 1.child SM1-COP naked
 ‘The child is naked’.

5. Conclusion

In the Kimakunduchi dialect of Swahili, the *wa*-copula, which can be analysed as the verb *-wa* inflected in the perfective form, functions to predicate the property as well as the location of the subject referent. Through a description of its morphosyntactic characteristics, this study has corroborated the argument that the Kimakunduchi *wa*-copula has taken a diachronic path from a locative verb to a general copula, a cross-linguistic tendency.

If the argument is valid, various morphosyntactic features of the *wa*-copula can be viewed as indicative of gradualness of the development process, which can be elucidated as follows: after acquiring a non-locative use as a result of the emergence of adverbial adjectives, the *wa*-copula gradually develops

to co-occur with attributive phrases and finally covers identification, and the transition from one stage to another occurs with the first and second-person subject forms.

A remaining issue is whether a similar diachronic approach is applicable to locative and copular verbs in other Bantu languages. According to Jerro (2015), *-ri* in Kinyarwanda, which is traceable to the Proto-Bantu **-dè* ‘be’ (Bastin et al. 2002), is only used for locative predication, but it can also be used for attributive predication when the subject is first and second-person. Similarly, the *wa*-copula in Kitumbatu varies in its functional range. If the variability of the Kitumbatu *wa*-copula is a trace of the proposed diachronic change, Kinyarwanda *-ri* also appears to be in the process of functional expansion. This considered, it is likely that locative verbs and copulas in other Bantu languages also retain clues of similar diachronic change. To confirm this likelihood, cross-linguistic observation and comparison of Bantu languages are necessary.

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Abbreviations

CONN = connective; COP = copula; DEM = demonstrative; FUT = future; IPFV = imperfective; LOC = locative; MED = medial; PASS = passive; PFV = perfective; PN = proper noun; PRF = perfect; PRO = pronoun; PROX = proximal; REL = relative clause marker; SG = singular; SM = subject marker

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Typology of grammatical relations in Runyankore-Rukiga:

A case of relative clause constructions

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Abstract

Grammatical relations, both the syntactic functions such as subject, object, direct object, and indirect object and the grammatical structures that go the syntactic functions such as preverbal and postverbal constituents and the markers that denote them, are not only construction-specific but also language-specific. Against this background, this article focuses on relative constructions in Runyankore-Rukiga to analyse grammatical relations that characterize constructions and depict forms that are typical to the language. Using examples from elicited data and other data sourced from literature, the analysis points to grammatical markers that denote arguments in a clause, the locus of marking: marking on the verb or noun, and arguments that are selected by particular markers and why. Illustrations include noun class markers that select corresponding noun arguments and clitics which denote omitted locative phrases. It is observed that these properties are generalizable over Bantu languages but are typical to Runyankore-Rukiga in terms of structural variations.

Key words

grammatical relations, typology, Runyankore-Rukiga, relativization, argument selector, referential properties

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1. Introduction

Runyankore-Rukiga is a hyphenated name which refers to two mutually intelligible dialects, namely, Rukiga and Runyankore. Both are varieties of narrow Bantu languages classified as E14 and E13 respectively (Maho, 2002). Under the ISO code classification, Rukiga is ISO 639-3 cgg while Runyankore is ISO 639-3 nyn. Spoken in south-western Uganda, Runyankore-Rukiga is an established written language used by an ethnic population of over five million people (Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2016). It has been relatively studied in terms of grammar. Some of the works that constitute this pool of study include Morris and Kirwan (1972), Taylor (1985), Asiiimwe (2007), Ndoleriire (2020), among others, although the subject of relativisation is not directly discussed in all of them.

Relativisation as a grammatical term refers to the construction of a relative clause. Relative clauses have mostly been studied in terms of descriptive grammar across a considerable number of Bantu languages, e.g. Kinyarwanda (Kimenyi 1980) and Chichewa (Mchombo 2004). In terms of transformational grammar, they can be considered to be transformational forms of deep structure sentences (Rowe and Levine 2009). Relativisation also can be looked at from the perspective of the framework of argument structure and grammatical relations. Some of the works that focus on this grammatical framework include Bickel (2010), van Vallin and LaPola (1997), and Wizlack (2011).

2. Background

Argument structure and grammatical relations as an area of study is concerned with what syntactic function a macro sentence argument takes up when a construction changes in shape and what morpho-syntactic relations are influenced by this shape. From here onwards, I will use construction interchangeably with clause. For instance, an active (construction) in (1a). versus passive clause

construction in (1b):

- (1) a. *The naughty boy kicked the dog.*
b. *The dog was kicked by the naughty boy.*

(1a) and (1b) are different clauses of the same sentence, with semantic arguments AGENT *the naughty boy*, and PATIENT *the dog*. In the active clause (1a), the grammatical relation (or function) of agent is subject and the grammatical relation for patient is object. In the passive clause (1b), the agent is a prepositional object *by the naughty boy* and the patient is subject. What this means is that while argument roles do not change, their grammatical relations (or role) change. Depending on the clause, grammatical relations change with morpho-syntactic markings. For instance, there is zero morphosyntactic marking of the arguments in (1a) but in (1b) the agent is marked by the preposition *by*. The marking signals an argument, in this case agent, whose regular syntactic order in the clause has changed. It has changed from the basic position (i.e. preverbal) to another position (i.e. post-verbal). In this context, *by* (a preposition) is an argument selector. It has selected only the agent for grammatical marking, among the arguments in the clause. The selection of agent for grammatical marking is a result of movement from its regular position, thus has to be marked (or flagged) with a differential tag. Differential markers do not associate with arguments at random (i.e. selection of arguments which they mark) but grammatically due to referential properties (or inherent properties) that are unique to an argument. E.g. in (1b), *by* marks the subject when it moved to post verbal position. This is a syntactic condition. Different types constructions may determine which markers can be associated with an argument, e.g. gerundives forms (or lexical nominalizations), focus constructions, and imperatives

according to Bickel (2010:28). Relative clauses are some of the constructions where the interplay between argument structure and grammatical relations can be studied at a broader level of general linguistics as well as at a micro level as describing them in the context of a specific language. While argument structures and their grammatical relations can contrast between one clause and another clause, also they can contrast between one language and another. Runyankore-Rukiga is understudied in terms of argument structure and grammatical relations let alone in terms of how these phenomena manifest in terms of relative clauses. Therefore, their description would be beneficial to the scholarship on argument structure and grammatical relations, particularly by showing the language-specific features. The main interest in this text is to show the formation of relative constructions in Runyankore-Rukiga in regular patterns, the grammatical relations that contrast them, and the morpho-syntactic marking of arguments.

3. Methodology

The examples and illustrations which are used were elicited. The key concepts which are focussed on in the discussion are: argument, argument structure, grammatical relations, and marking.

Arguments, and specifically semantic arguments which are the basis of grammatical relations are named variously, i.e. as agent/instigator, patient/sufferer/experiencer, recipient, locative, among others as mentioned in several sources such as Keith & Miller (2008), Payne (2006), and VanValin & Lapolla (1997). Also, they have been named by using general terms so that there is consistency in nomenclature and conceptualization. Accordingly, there are a few terms now that represent all the semantic roles. These are: sole agent, agent, patient, theme, and goal. These have been used in this text in the discussion of grammatical relations. Where they have not been written in full, especially in the examples, they have been abbreviated as \emptyset for semantic argument, S for sole agent, A for agent, P for patient, T for theme,

and G for goal. These are discussed in terms of Runyankore-Rukiga going by the different kinds of constructions derived from basic sentences. Basic sentences in this case have been determined from the perspective of one-argument sentence pattern, two-argument sentence pattern, and three-argument sentence pattern.

Grammatical relations go beyond the traditional types such as subject, object, direct object, and indirect object, among others, which correspond to Agent, Patient, Theme and Goal respectively. They also include morpho-syntactic relationships such as agreement and the possible combinations resulting from mapping grammatical markers on to arguments, e.g. a preposition onto a noun. In addition, based on Witzlack (2011:79) ... *a grammatical relation is regarded as a set of arguments selected by an argument selector...* i.e. if one or more than one argument is marked by the same marker although in different syntactic environments, similarity in marking is a grammatical relation. Therefore, this chapter covers several form of grammatical relations ranging from argument-function relations to morpho-syntactic mappings, and sets of selected arguments.

4. Relativisation

Relativisation is the process of turning a propositional [sentence construction] into a referential expression (Bickel 2010; 2021). In a one-argument construction, it is possible to relativize the argument as shown in (2) below. The construction in (2a) is non-relativized while (2b) is a clause which is derived from (2a) by applying the process of relativization.

- (2) a. *abaana ba-ka-shek-a*
 children (S2) S/A-PAST-laugh-FV
 ‘The children laughed.’
- b. *abaana a-ba-a-shek-ire*
 children (S1) REL-S/A-PAST-laugh-PERF
 ‘The children who laughed.’

With reference to (2a), *abaana* ‘children’ as an argument, in this case a sole argument, bears the subject relation, i.e. it functions as subject. It is marked on the verb by a pronominal prefix denoted as S/A for subject agreement. It grammatically agrees with the noun class of the subject noun *abaana* (children). It is flagged, i.e. marked on the verb for subject agreement as denoted as by S/A. Therefore, the subject relation is also marked on the verb. This structure is similar to the one in (2b) except that the latter is relativized as denoted by REL. Due to the relative, the tense marker changes from *-ka-* to *-a-*. In addition, the final vowel in (2a) is replaced by the perfective, *-ire* in (2b).

5. Relativisation in a sole argument clause

All of the above illustrate what happens when a sole argument is relativized. But two more things need to be mentioned, i.e. argument selection and referential (or inherent) properties which favour the selection. This can be looked at in terms of argument selector, i.e. which relative marker selects the argument for relativisation. With reference to the relativized construction in (2): the argument selected for relativization is S, the argument selector (the marker which selects the argument for relativization) is *a-*, and the referential properties of the argument selected are: singularity of argument (being the sole

singularity which has already been mentioned and now human and plurality. In Runyankore-Rukiga, the relative marker *a-* will select an argument with the properties human and plural. The relative marker is inflected on the verb which is the head in the clause. This is known as head marking, and it is associated with the argument selector.

6. Relativisation in a two-argument clause

The previous section has dealt with relativisation of a sole argument. The current section is dealing with relativisation of arguments in a two-argument construction. The aim is to describe the arguments that constitute the two argument structure, the grammatical relations for the arguments, strategies for relativisation of the arguments, and the referential properties for the relativized argument. Sentence three is a basic example of a two-argument clause.

- (4) omwojo ni-a-kund-a enyama
 boy (A1) FOC-S/A (1)-like-FV meat(P9)
 ‘The boy likes meat.’

The symbol A denotes agent, i.e. this argument is playing the role of agent. By its position in the sentence (namely preverbal) its grammatical relation is subject. It is marked on the verb by *S/A*, which means subject agreement marker. The second argument in the clause is labelled P, for patient. Its direct grammatical relation is object. Both agent and patient are labelled with numbers 1 and 9 respectively to show the noun class of each of the nouns as is characteristic of Bantu languages. Wherever these number occur in the examples in this text they denote noun class.

It is possible to relativise either of the arguments in a two-argument clause, i.e. the subject grammatical relation and the object grammatical relation. If the A relation is relativized (i.e. A- \emptyset), it results into a new clause in (5):

- (5) omwojo o-ri-ku-kund-a enyama
 boy (A1) REL-PRES-INF-like-FV meat (P9)
 ‘The boy who likes meet.’

If it is the P- \emptyset relation which is relativized, it results into a new clause as shown in (6):

- (6) enyama ei omwojo a-ri-ku-kund-a
 meat (P9) REL boy (A1) S/A(A1)-be-INF-like-FV
 ‘The meat which the boy likes.’

The examples show that it is possible to relativize the A- \emptyset relation and the P- \emptyset relation. In (5) the relativized constituent is A while in (6) the relativized constituent is P. The relative form differs in either case, with *o-* marked on the verb as the relative marker for the agent and *ei* as a standalone marker for the patient. There is change of order of A and P in the constructions. In (5) A is in the subject position and plays the subject relation but P is in the object position and plays the object relation. In (6), A is part of the subordinate clause (*ei omwojo arikukunda* ‘which the boy likes’). It performs the object relation within this clause while the relative marker *ei* also functions as the object pronoun. The relative marker indicates co-reference with the preceding argument (or antecedent according to Wong 2021) and can

function as a pronominal in absence of the antecedent. According to Asiimwe (2016), a relative marker also functions as a complementizer in terms of syntactic structure. In the main clause (*enyama ei omwojo arikukunda* ‘the meat which the boy likes’), P is moved up to the preverbal position. It plays the role of the head noun, which is modified by the following relative clause.

By way of selection of arguments, the A relation is selected for subject relativisation (i.e. *o-* is the subject relative). The P relation is selected for object relativisation (*ei* functions as the object relative pronoun). The argument selectors are different in either case, namely, *o-* for relativisation of A and *ei* for relativisation of P. Also, they occupy different positions in terms of word order as will be seen shortly. There are referential properties of the argument in question that determine the argument selector. It would be important to know what these properties are for each of the arguments that it has a different argument selector. A (*omwojo* ‘boy’) has the property noun class 1, which is human. P has the property noun class 9, which is nonhuman. The relative marker *o-* associates with arguments that bear the first set of referential properties. P (*enyama* ‘meat’) associates the second set of referential properties. The two arguments have different referential properties, hence different relative markers.

7. Relativisation in a three-argument clause

The sentence in (7) below is an example of a three-argument clause.

- (7) abagyenzi ba-a-twar-a ebintu aha motoka
 travellers (A2) S/A-PAST-take-FV luggage (T8) onto car (G9)
 ‘The travellers have taken their luggage onto the car.’

There are three arguments in the sentence, namely, A - agent, T - theme, and G - goal. They are expressed by nouns which belong to different noun classes: noun class 2 in the case of *abagyenzi*, noun class 8 for *ebintu* and noun class 9 for *(e)motoka*. This particular noun does not have an initial vowel in the clause. Like all other nouns in Runyankore-Rukiga, the initial vowel is lost when a noun is preceded by a preposition in a clause.

It is possible to relativize all the three arguments in the clause shown. I start with the relativisation of the A argument. When it is relativized it results into the clause below in (8).

- (8) abagyenzi a-ba-a-twar-a ebintu aha motoka
travellers (A2) REL(A2)-S/A-PAST-take-FV luggage (T7) onto car (G9)
'The travellers who have taken their luggage onto the car.'

In this particular clause, A is still assuming the grammatical relation for subject similar to its role in (8). The relative marker which is in agreement with the noun class of the subject noun *abagyenzi* 'travellers' is marked on the verb as REL. This form of relative is in conformity with the agent noun and therefore selected as a relative marker. The referential properties of the noun agent are: human and noun class 2. Similarly, the relative marker denoted human and noun class. If it were not for these properties, the selection would be ungrammatical in terms of agreement. For instance, assuming the noun class were to be different, e.g. noun class 1, it would not be in conformity with the noun agent, thereby making the construction ungrammatical argument selector, for example in (9).

- (9) *abagyenzi o-ba-a-twar-a ebintu aha motoka
 travellers (A2) REL(a2)-S/A-PAST-take-FV luggage (T7) onto car (G9)

Intended: ‘The travellers who have taken their luggage onto the car.’

The examples (8) and (9) illustrate relativisation for Agent in a three-argument clause. The following paragraphs illustrate the relativisation of another argument in a three-argument clause, namely, the Theme. This is indicated in (10) by the noun *ebintu* (luggage).

- (10) ebintu ebi abagyenzi ba-a-twar-a aha motoka
 luggage (T8) REL travellers (A2) S/A-PAST-take-FV onto car (G9)

‘The luggage which the travellers have taken to the car.’

The noun belongs to noun class 8. This is denoted against the noun in the clause as T which is theme. Unlike in the unmarked clause (8) where the arguments are in the order A-T-G, in (11) this order has changed to T-A-G much as the grammatical relations have not changed. The theme is still the direct object although it has been transposed to the initial position of the construction. Because it is not in its canonical position when this change occurs, it is being identified by a marker *ebi* (pronoun) and it has to interrelate it to the remaining part of the clause. This is the sense in which it functions as a relative. In (10), the relative *ebi* selects the object relation for relativisation. The object and the relative are in agreement due to the referential properties which are shared between the two. These are: plurality and object. The noun class prefix of the subject is in plural form, i.e. *ebintu* (luggage), so is the relative marker *ebintu* (luggage), an extended meaning which denotes *things*.

Relative markers are not flagged (or marked) in the same position in a clause. The relative marker for agent is marked on the verb as in (8), while for theme it is not marked on the verb but stands alone as a relativiser. This is neither head marking (marking on the verb) nor dependent marking (adposition) but another form of marking. Other types of grammatical relation marking have been named following whether they marked on the head of the clause (head marking) and the constituent which depends (or is governed by the head), i.e. dependent marking. In the case of *ebi* as a relative marker which functions as a relativiser but is also a pronominal at the same time since it retains the object role which was assumed by the theme in the post verbal position before changing to the preverbal position.

Having seen the theme in terms of relativization, the argument selector for theme, the referential properties which influence its selection, and pronominal marking, I will explain the relativization for goal (G).

With reference to (7) which is the basic clause (or unmarked clause), there are three arguments: Agent, Theme, and Goal. The first two have been explained in the preceding paragraphs in terms of how they are affected when relativized. Based on the unmarked clause in (8), when Goal is relativized, the resulting clause will be as follows:

(11) emotoka ei abagyenzi ba-a-twar-a-ho ebintu

car (G9) REL travellers (A2) S/A-PAST-take-FV-CL luggage (T8)

‘The car to which the travellers have taken their luggage.’

In the unmarked clause (8), the grammatical relation for A is subject, for T it is direct object while for G it is indirect object. The order of arrangement is A_{Subject}-T_{Direct object}-G_{Indirect object}. With relativization,

the order changes to G-A-T. The grammatical relation of each remains the same but due to change in the order there are signallers to identify some of the arguments. In this case, *ei* (pronoun) is introduced to identify the indirect object argument (hence a relative pronoun) and a clitic *ho* is introduced to fill the place of the preposition which has been a syntactic head of the moved argument. Taylor (1985) elaborates by saying that when preposition *omu*, ‘in’ or *aha*, ‘on’ is involved (in an unmarked clause), upon relativization, it is attached to the verb as a clitic form, *-mu* or *-ho*. The example in (8) involves *aha* as a preposition. It has changed to *ha* upon relativization as shown in (11). In terms of argument marking, the relative pronoun is associated with the moved argument, in this case goal as a co-reference. This is more of reference argument marking than head marking and dependent marking. Grammatically, this kind of reference marker is known as object relative pronoun. It interrelates the object and the subject. It is the argument selector for this interrelationship as it shares the same referential properties with the noun argument, i.e. *emotoka* (car). The properties are: noun class 9 and singular in terms of number. Therefore, when relativizing any noun in class whose number is singular it takes *ei-* as the argument marker in terms of co-reference.

8. Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to describe grammatical relations, argument structure, and relativization in the context of Runyankore-Rukiga. The focus in the chapter was to show how arguments are marked when a clause is relativized, how the marker for the different arguments is selected, and how the grammatical relation of an argument may change in light of relativization. According to the description in the chapter, any argument in a clause (a one-argument clause, a two-argument clause, a three-argument clause) can be relativized. The A argument does not change its position when relativized but

T and G change position. When arguments are relativized, relative markers are introduced in the clause to identify them. Specific markers select specific arguments according to referential properties. Where relativization affects an argument with preposition (dependent marking), the preposition changes into a clitic and it is marked on the verb. Therefore, in terms of grammatical typology, the chapter shows how arguments are marked and also shows the stability of the grammatical relations in Runyankore-Rukiga.

Abbreviations

1, 2, 3... = Noun class number; A = Agent; CL = Clitic; FOC = Focus; FV = Final Vowel; G = Goal; INF = Infinitive; P = Patient; PAST = Past tense; PERF = Perfective; POSS = Possessive; PRES = Present tense; PRON = Pronominal marker; REL = Relative; S = Sole agent; S/A = Subject Agreement; T = Theme

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Taboo Expressions in the Nyoro Language: Descriptions and Analyses

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Abstract

This paper examines taboo and bad omens in the Nyoro society, which relate to all sections of people (setting aside taboos relating to clan regulations). Taboos and bad omens reflect individuals' relationships with the society and the entire world. They both regulate the conducts of individuals. Taboo expressions are deconstructed into four clauses, namely, commandments, violations, consequences, and reasons, in order to clarify what is overtly expressed and what is not through logical analyses. This study tries to analyse taboo expressions from a functional perspective, to the largest possible extent, seeking the hidden reasons behind their expression. Taboos stipulate violations like normal warnings, but they are always paired with a scarring consequence which hides the real reason, whereas normal warnings express the real reason without the consequence of the violation. Taboos express prohibitions that one can control, regardless of whether one observes them, while bad omens refer to what one should do when one encounters an inevitable evil force.

Key words

taboo; bad omen; logical analysis; hidden reason; Nyoro

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1. Introduction

We find taboos in many areas of Africa. In Japan too, we have taboos. Maybe taboos are found almost everywhere in the world. In this paper, the term ‘taboo’ refers to expressions similar to the common Japanese saying: ‘If you whistle in the night, a devil will come’.

Taboos tie to wide-ranging aspects of daily life. Various disciplines are interested in them. However, few studies comprehensively examine numerous taboos that stem from one ethnic group. One such study is Yoneyama’s (1990) analysis of taboos, including bad omens, within the Tembo people of eastern Congo. Unfortunately, this publication does not textualise Tembo phrases and clauses. It merely uses translations, and misses the logical structure analyses.

This paper presents a field research about the Nyoro people¹ in western Uganda from 2008 to 2017. It corresponds to the text study aspect of language research.² This paper aims to analyse taboo expressions and related bad omens in Nyoro in terms of form and content, based on linguistic descriptions. It clarifies in particular the logical form and content by deconstructing expressions into clauses and laying them out to show what are included as taboo expressions and bad omens.³

2. Taboos and bad omens

Nyoro has three terms concerning taboos, as shown in (1):

¹ The Nyoro are a Bantu-speaking people with a population of 967,000, according to Simons and Fennig (2018). They are mostly agriculturalists, cultivating bananas, millet, potatoes, and coffee, among others. Cows also have a certain role in their economy. Their language, Nyoro (or Orunyoro with the augment and prefix), has a near genealogical relationship with neighbouring languages, especially Tooro, Nkore, and Kiga.

² As for Nyoro texts, the author has published three papers in Japanese, namely: ‘Greeting Formulas in Nyoro’ (Kaji, 2012), ‘Euphemistic and Figurative Expressions in Nyoro’ (Kaji, 2013), and ‘Personal Names in Nyoro’ (Kaji, 2018).

³ This is a slightly revised version of the author’s paper under the same title, published in 2019 in Japanese.

- (1) a. *i:hâno* (sg.), *amahâno* (pl.) ‘taboo, prohibition’
b. *ekisirâ:ni* (sg.), *ebisirâ:ni* (pl.) ‘bad omen, ill presage’
c. *omuzîro* (sg.), *emizîro* (pl.) ‘totem’

As an example of *i:hâno* (1a),⁴ in Nyoro, they say ‘a boy should not sit on the cooking stove’, and the consequence, which is not expressed, is that ‘if a boy sits on the cooking stove, his father dies’.⁵ This is similar to the Japanese taboo: ‘If you whistle in the night, a devil will come’. In other words, taboos are prohibitive expressions that produce scary consequences.

Nyoro also has what is called *ekisirâ:ni* (1b) or bad omens and ill presage. ‘When you embark on a journey, you should stop if you see a rat cut across the road’ is one such example. In Japan, people often say, ‘if a chopstick breaks when eating, this is a bad omen’ and ‘if tea leave axes float vertically in your cup, this is a good omen’. However, in Nyoro, the author was not able to dig up good omens, only bad ones.

Finally, the Nyoro society is composed of clans that possess a totem, *omuzîro* (1c). Totems have a set of rules which are closely related to taboos. For example, the Abagwê:ri clan has *engâbi* or ‘bushbuck’ as their totem and they have a series of prohibitions related to this animal (e.g., not to eat it). This prohibition, in Nyoro understanding, serves as an explanation similar to Islam declarations to not eat pork. In other words, whereas *i:hâno* concerns the whole of Nyoro society, *omuzîro* only concerns the clan. The following sections only deal with the *i:hâno* taboos and those of *ekisirâ:ni* that are related to them. Clan taboos are omitted in this paper because they represent inherent clan problems and must be

⁴ In what follows, only the singular form is used.

⁵ The same thing is said for girls: ‘A girl should not sit on the cooking stove’. The consequence is ‘if a girl sits on the cooking stove, her mother dies’.

discussed in association with them. This is beyond the scope of this research.

3. Structure of taboo expressions

The essential aspect of *i:hâno* taboo expressions is the prohibition ‘to not do’ or a negative commandment. However, a taboo expression necessarily contains, although does not always overtly expresses, a violation and its consequential result, as (2) below indicates (e.g., if you do that, this will happen). In most cases, the result of a violation entails ill luck, such as dying or figuring in an accident. As taboo expressions imply clauses, the following discussion deconstructs them to clarify each included clause.

- (2) logical structure of taboo expressions:
 - a. commandment (prohibition in most cases)
 - b. violation
 - c. consequence

The aforementioned example, ‘a boy should not sit on the cooking stove’, can be analysed using a linguistic analysis as shown in (3) and a logical structure analysis as shown in (4) below.

- (3) a. Omwó:ǰó t'aiká:rrá haihêga.
b. o-mu-odžo ti a-ikarr-a ha-i-hega.
c. Aug1-NPr1-boy not he-sit-Fin NPr16-NPr5-cooking stone⁶
d. A boy should not sit on the cooking stove.⁷
- (4) a. commandment: A boy should not sit on the cooking stove.
b. violation: A boy sits on the cooking stove.
(b'. violative condition: If a boy sits on a cooking stove)
c. consequence: His father dies.

The Nyoro expression in (3a) is written with a broad phonetic transcription and (3b) is a morphological division of each word, followed by glossing in (3c). Finally, (3d) indicates the English meaning. In the logical structure analysis of (4), (4a) shows the negative commandment (prohibition) which is what is expressed in (3). The following violation in (4b) is actually expressed as a violative condition, as in (4b'). Finally, the consequence (4c) ends the statement.

As the logical structure in (4) indicates, taboo expressions in Nyoro consist of commandments, violations, and consequences. The consequence in particular is expressed as if by causal laws with the temporal development of a deed in the way of 'commandment (prohibition) → violation →

⁶ The abbreviations used are as follows. Aug: augment (a kind of article); Clit: clitic; Fin: final; NPr: nominal prefix; ObjRel: object relative; Perf: perfective; PPr: pronominal prefix; Prefin: prefinal; Subj: subjective; SubRel: subject relative. Nyoro is a class language. The numbers after NPr are the class numbers of the nouns in question. For simplicity, 'he/she' is used rather than SPr1 (subject prefix of class 1) for humans. To clarify what 'it' refers to, the class number is put down as 'it7' ('it' refers to a class 7 noun). See Kaji (2015) for an outline of Nyoro's noun class system.

⁷ The cooking stove is called *i:hêga* (sg.), *amahêga* (pl.) (or *i:hîga* (sg.), and *amahîga* (pl.)) in Nyoro (Kaji, 2015). It is made with stones, usually three, to stabilize a pan during cooking. It is located in the centre of a kitchen and appears to be a good stool when a pan is not on it. However, one has to be careful because it may be very hot even when the fire has already been put out.

consequence'. Significantly, there is an illogical leap in the process of violation to consequence, as one does not know why the father would die if a boy sits on the cooking stove. Another important point about Nyoro taboo expressions is that, in most cases, there is a hidden reason for the prohibition of a deed. One would assume that the reason why the boy should not sit on a cooking stove is to avoid getting burnt. However, the taboo does not declare this reason. Rather, it states 'do not sit on the cooking stove, because your father will die'. Therefore, it is necessary to add another element, the hidden reason, in addition to (2) and (4), when considering the logical structure of the taboo expressions.

- (5) a. commandment: A boy should not sit on the cooking stove.
- b. violation: A boy sits on the cooking stove.
- (b'. violative condition: If a boy sits on the cooking stove)
- c. consequence: His father dies.
- d. reason: The boy may get burnt.

Returning to the question on why would the father die, what this really means is that 'do not sit on the cooking stove, because you may get burnt'. However, as children frequently do not listen or take the adults' advice, the warning was turned into: 'If you sit on such a place, your father may die'. The child does not grasp the meaning and may be surprised by the leap from cooking stove to father's death. At that point, a father may enter the scene, saying that he suddenly feels pain in the belly, and may even add, 'ow, I am dying'. The child would be very surprised and promise never to sit on a cooking stove. Hearing that, the father would say in relief: 'My pain is gradually diminishing'.

What is important here is that the child does not understand the logical relationship between sitting

on the stove and the father's death. Observed closely, it comes across as a causal correlation of time in the process of violation resulting in ill luck. In reality, no such causal correlation exists as it is not possible for a parent to die as a direct or indirect consequence of a child sitting on the cooking stove. What is meant here is a degree expression, in that sitting on the cooking stove is as bad as the death of a parent. However, the child thinks that such a causal correlation exists. The leap in logic here is intended to make a causal correlation difficult to understand. If it were easy to understand, children may try to find a way to make the parent not die even if they sit on the cooking stove. Depending on the degree of the leap in logic, it will be more effective and the child will not make such efforts.

The following is another example related to a husband's dignity.

- (6) a. Omukázi t'asembézá epáma y'embógô hálí í:bâ.
b. o-mu-kazi ti a-sembez-a e-ŋ-ama ya e-m-bogo
c. Aug1-Npr1-wife not she-serve-Fin Aug9-NPr9-meat of9 Aug9-NPr9-buffalo
b. ha-li iba.
c. NPr16-is[SubRel] her.husband
d. The wife should not serve buffalo meat in the presence of her husband.
- (7) a. commandment: The wife should not serve buffalo meat in the presence of her husband.
b. violation: The wife serves buffalo meat in the presence of her husband.
(b'. violative condition: If the wife serves buffalo meat in the presence of her husband)
c. consequence: Her husband will be impotent.
d. reason: Buffalo meat represents the husband's dignity, which the wife should not debase.

Buffaloes are difficult to hunt and their meat is a symbol of the husband's dignity. When serving the table, the wife can carve certain meats, such as beef or chicken, but not buffalo, because it is the husband who must carve and serve it. If the wife does, it violates the husband's dignity. In taboo language, this is expressed as 'the husband will be impotent'.

4. Affirmative and negative commandments

Commandments are overwhelmingly negative in Nyoro taboo expressions, such as those shown in (3) and (6), but some affirmative commandments have also appeared, such as that shown in (8).

- (8) a. Omwisíkí aika:rra há:nsî akubíre amagûru.
 b. o-mu-isiki a-ikarr-a ha-n-si a-kub-ire
 c. Aug1-NPr1-girl she-sit-Fin NPr16-NPr9-ground she-fold-Perf [SubjRel]
 b. a-ma-guru.
 c. Aug6-NPr6-leg
 d. A girl must bend her legs when she sits on the ground.
- (9) a. commandment: A girl must bend her legs when she sits on the ground.
 b. violation: A girl does not bend her legs when she sits on the ground.
 (b'. violative condition: If a girl does not bend her legs when she sits on the ground)
 c. consequence: She will become sterile.

Here we have an affirmative commandment 'Bend the legs when you sit on the ground!' which can be changed to a negative commandment 'Do not stretch your legs when you sit on the ground!' by making

it prohibitive, as in (10).

- (10) a. negative commandment (prohibition): A girl should not stretch her legs when she sits on the ground.
- b. violation: A girl stretches her legs when she sits on the ground.
- (b'. violative condition: If a girl stretches her legs when she sits on the ground)
- c. consequence: She will become sterile.

As a logical analysis of (8), (9) and (10) are the same. The author, in a position to attach weight to expressive ways in Nyoro, considers the first clause as a commandment, which is either an affirmative commandment or a negative commandment, this latter being a prohibition. In this regard, negative commandments or prohibitions are much more prominent, as taboos essentially serve to ban people from conducting certain actions.⁸ The hidden reason can be deduced as ‘if a girl does not bend her legs when she sits on the ground, her underwear or even her intimate parts can be seen, which must be avoided’.

Similar to (8), (11) is an affirmative commandment, but differs in that it is followed by a negative commandment. This affirmative-negative commandment sequence is not customary, but their co-occurrence indicates that they represent the same thing.⁹

⁸ Thus far, 17 out of the 118 collected taboo expressions are affirmative commandments.

⁹ The sequence of a negative commandment after an affirmative one (or an affirmative commandment after a negative one) repeats the same content and is not considered a formal representation, as it is more common to omit the latter part. The author recorded example (11) as the informant had said it, but that very person did not repeat the latter part when asked to say it during another occasion.

- (11) a. Ekyadá:di, bakizí:ká ab'o:rugá:ndâ; tibakinágâ.
 b. e-ki-ada:di, ba-ki-zi:k-a a-ba o-ru-ganda; ti ba-ki-nag-a.
 c. Aug7-NPr7-afterbirth they2-it7-bury-Fin Aug2-of2 Aug11-NPr11clan not they2-it7-throw-Fin
 d. An afterbirth must be buried by a clan member. It must never be thrown away.
- (12) a. commandment: An afterbirth must be buried by a clan member.
 b. violation: An afterbirth is thrown away without being buried.
 (b'. violative condition: If an afterbirth is thrown away carelessly without being buried)
 c. consequence: It will be eaten by a dog and the baby will die.
 d. reason: One must clean up after the birth properly.

5. Prohibition or violations and their consequences

Since taboos are essentially prohibiting certain conducts, it is quite natural that their expressions have become prohibitive. However, in some taboos only a violation and its consequence are expressed without a prohibition. Example (13) is one such case.

- (13) a. Obu ogobézá ow’omukâgo, ozimba ê:nda.
b. obu o-gobez-a o-wa o-mu-kago, o-zimb-a
c. when you(sg.)-betray-Fin Aug1-of1 Aug3-NPr3-pactof.blood you(sg.)-swell-Fin
b. e-n-da.
c. Aug9-NPr9-belly
d. If you betray a friend with whom you concluded a blood pact,¹⁰ your belly will swell.
- (14) a. commandment: You must not betray a friend with whom you concluded a blood pact.
b. violation: You betray a friend with whom you concluded a blood pact.
(b’.violative condition: If you betray a friend with whom you concluded a blood pact)
c. consequence: Your belly will swell.
d. reason: You must never betray a friend with whom you concluded a blood pact.

In this example, the reason for the prohibition is clear, and although it is not overtly expressed, it is known to everyone and not hidden. In this regard, this taboo differs from the others, although the consequence derived from the violation is illogical and a threat (i.e., your belly will swell). What is important in this example is that it is an evidence of a complementary distribution between the prohibition, and the violation and its consequence. That is, in (3) and (6), as well as (8) and (11), only the commandment, affirmative or negative, is expressed, while the violation and consequence are not. In example (13), in contrast, only the violation and its consequence are expressed, while the

¹⁰ *Omukâgo* (sg.), *emikâgo* (pl.) ‘pact of blood’ is a ritual whereby two persons cut one’s own finger, take a coffee bean with the blood of the other person, and swallow it. A strong friendship is kept throughout one’s life, as the two persons make a fealty to each other in this way.

commandment is not.¹¹

We can reverse these expressions as follows. If the negative commandment ‘a boy should not sit on the cooking stove’ in (3) is expressed with the violation and the consequence, the expression will be like (15). In addition, the expressions of violation and consequence in (13) can be changed to a prohibitive one, as in (16).

(15) If a boy sits on a cooking stove, his father dies.

(16) You must never betray a friend with whom you concluded a blood pact.

Based on this, we can say that (17) is about taboo expressions in Nyoro.

- (17) a. In expressing a taboo, either the commandment (affirmative or negative), or the violation and the consequence are expressed. They cannot be expressed at the same time.
- b. The majority of taboo expressions present a negative commandment or prohibition. Those expressing the violation and consequences are few.¹²

¹¹ Even though a complementary distribution between two aspects is confirmed, they cannot directly be considered as one unit. Although the English [h] and [ŋ], for example, have a complementary distribution, they do not constitute one phoneme. Phonetic similarity, such as the Japanese [ʃ] and [s] for /s/, is necessary. In (3), the commandment ‘a boy should not sit on the cooking stove’ and the violation ‘a boy sits on the cooking stove’ have a commonality, but the consequence ‘his father dies’ has no relation with the commandment. To consider them as one unit, the consequence must be considered as incidental to the violation. Although (11) may initially seem to be in complementary distribution, it is not, because the latter part is an addition. While the two concerned elements do not appear simultaneously in complementary distribution, they appear at the same time in (11).

¹² Example (51), cited later in respect to bad omen, expresses the violation and consequence, not the commandment. In contrast, many taboo expressions in Japanese reflect the violation and consequence, without a commandment, such as ‘if you whistle in the night, a devil will come’.

6. Difference between normal warnings and taboo expressions

Using and examining normal warning expressions that imply a prohibition can help clarify the characteristics of taboo expressions. For example, it is sometimes said in Japan that ‘if you drink too much water before going to bed, you will wet your bed’. If we logically analyse this expression, we will obtain (18).

(18) non-taboo expression: If you drink too much water before going to bed, you will wet your bed.

a. commandment: You should not drink too much water before going to bed.

b. violation: You drink too much water before going to bed.

(b’. violative condition: If you drink too much water before going to bed)

c. consequence: None.

d. reason: You will wet your bed.

In (18), the commandment is not directly expressed as in (13). However, it is clear that (18) is a negative commandment, because if you violate it, bed will be wet.

Using the word ‘result’ here is intentional, equivalent to ‘the reason’ in logical analyses, as it reflects the difference with the consequence of the logical analysis of (5). Specifically, this expression does not contain a scary consequence, such as parental death, swelling of the belly, or figuring in an accident. Rather, it references the real reason why one should not commit the violation. Thus, the passage from violation to reason is natural, as everyone understands it easily.

Both the taboo expressions of (13) and the non-taboo expression of (18) aim to prohibit a conduct, which is not expressed directly, and their violation produces a result of some sort. However, most taboo

expressions hide the true reason and predicate a consequence with some leap in logic. As earlier noted, children do not understand why their parents would die if they sit on a cooking stove. If the given reason was ‘they get burnt’, then it would be the same as (18) and everyone would easily understand the process from violation to reason. However, it would also no longer be a threat and thus not be an effective taboo expression.

Why, then, do people say such a thing as ‘parents die’? One could say ‘you will have an accident’ or ‘you cannot get married’. The conduct is anti-cultural and relate it to being as bad as a parent’s death. Nonetheless, it is natural for people to choose the most effective expression for the persons in question. Therefore, ‘your parent will die’ is the most effective expression to make children listen in this case.

7. Easy and difficult to understand expressions of taboo

Among the Nyoro taboo expressions, there are many whose conduct prohibitions are easy to understand. This section provides some such examples. First, example (19) is probably understandable from a hygiene standpoint, although the expression does not state ‘because of hygienic concerns’, but ‘because the testicles swell’.¹³

¹³ For women, the equivalent is: ‘If they urinate in a garden of sweet potatoes, they become sterile’.

(19) a. Omusáidza t'apá:rá omumusírí gw'ebitakúlí.

b. o-mu-saidza ti a-ja:r-a o-mu-mu-siri gwa

c. Aug1-NPr1-man not he-urinate-Fin Aug18-NPr18-NPr3-garden of3

b. e-bi-takuli.

c. Aug8-NPr8-sweet.potato

d. A man should not urinate in a garden of sweet potatoes.

(20) a. commandment: A man should not urinate in a garden of sweet potatoes.

b. violation: A man urinates in a garden of sweet potatoes.

(b'. violative condition: If a man urinates in a garden of sweet potatoes)

c. consequence: The man's testicles will swell.

d. reason: A man should not urinate on sweet potatoes, because they are an important food source.

Next, we examine (21).

(21) a. Omwá:na mwó:dzó t'akwá:tá bapá:na omumbâdzu, rû:ndi habiŋwé:ká by'ensôni.

b. o-mu-ana mu-odzo ti a-kwat-a ba-ŋaŋa o-mu-m-badzu,

c. Aug1-NPr1-child NPr1-boy not he-touch-Fin NPr2-sister Aug18-NPr18-NPr10-side

b. rundi ha-bi-ŋweka bya e-n-soni.

c. or NPr16-NPr8-part of8 Aug9-NPr9-shame

d. A boy should not touch his sister's side or lower abdomen.

- (22) a. commandment: A boy should not touch his sister's side or lower abdomen.
 b. violation: A boy touches his sister's side or lower abdomen.
 (b'. violative condition: If a boy touches his sister's side or lower abdomen)
 c. consequence: His father will have an accident.
 d. reason: A boy should avoid touches that may lead to sexual activity with his sister.

Anyone can understand this taboo in relation to sexual matters, but the consequence of the violation is intimidating. As the father's accident cannot be prevented, regardless of how careful a boy is, it must never happen. Therefore, a boy should never touch his sister's side or lower abdomen. In example (23), which relates to in-law relationships, a sexual factor is once again strongly prominent.

- (23) a. Omusáidža t'ályá ebyokúlyá na jinazâ:ra.
 b. o-mu-saidža ti a-li-a e-bi-okulya na jina-za:ra.
 c. Aug1-NPr1-man not he-eat-Fin Aug8-Npr8-eating with his mother-in-law
 d. A man should not have a meal with his mother-in-law.

- (24) a. commandment: A man should not have a meal with his mother-in-law.
 b. violation: A man has a meal with his mother-in-law.
 (b'. violative condition: If a man has a meal with his mother-in-law)
 c. consequence: Serious calamities, such as accidents, will happen to him.
 d. reason: Having a meal with his mother-in-law will increase familiarity, which may eventually lead to sexual relations. A man should avoid such a thing.

The next one, (25), may appear difficult to grasp at first glance, but it is comprehensible if considered simply. It is similar to the Japanese expression ‘if you whistle at night, a burglar (or devil) comes’.

(25) a. Omusáidža t’asulízá ekírô.

b. o-mu-saidža ti a-suliz-a e-ki-ro.

c. Aug1-NPr1-man not he-whistle-Fin Aug7-NPr7-night

d. A man should not whistle at night.¹⁴

(26) a. commandment: A man should not whistle at night.

b. violation: A man whistles at night.

(b’ .violative condition: If a man whistles at night)

c. consequence: His family perishes.

d. reason: As we cannot see clearly at night, if you whistle, people will know there is a house in the vicinity and that may attract a thief or burglar.

Moreover, women’s menstruation is one of the major themes of taboo expression. Example (27) is just one of the many related expressions.

¹⁴ Whistling itself is a taboo for women.

(27) a. Omwisíki¹⁵ t'akámá ê:nte álí omubigérê.¹⁶

b. o-mu-isiki ti a-kam-a e-n-te a-li

c. Aug1-NPr1-girl not she-milk-Fin Aug9-NPr9-cow she-is[SubjRel]

b. o-mu-bi-gere.

c. Aug18-NPr18-Npr8-foot

d. A menstruating woman should not milk cows.

(28) a. commandment: A menstruating woman should not milk cows.

b. violation: A menstruating woman milks cows.

(b'.violative condition: If a menstruating woman milks cows)

c. consequence: The nipples of the cows will clog and yield no milk. The cows will die.

d. reason: People should make arrangements to exempt menstruating women from heavy work.

This taboo is probably adopted in many cow-raising areas of the world. The Nyoro explains that ‘if a menstruating woman milks cows, the milk could be stained with menstrual blood’. Although it is reasonable to fear contamination, this seems to be a made-up excuse to the author. Milking cows is heavy labour. A woman may have a difficult menstrual period and would need time to rest in her condition. Thus, giving her the time to rest without pushing herself in such situation is a thoughtful consideration.

The following expression (29) ‘a menstruating woman should not go gathering winged ants at night’

¹⁵ *omwisíki* literally means ‘girl’ (see the gloss). However, it designates a wide range of stages, from three or four year-old to before reaching *omukázi* ‘mature female, wife’. For this reason, it is translated as ‘woman’ rather than ‘girl’ depending on the context.

¹⁶ *omubigérê* ‘between the feet’ is a euphemistic expression of ‘menstruant’. The same can be said of *murwáire* ‘sick’ in (29) and *omukwê:zi* ‘in the month’ in (31). See Kaji (2013).

is probably provided for the same reason.

- (29) a. Omwisíkí murwáire t'agé:ndá kukwá:ta é:nswâ ekírô.
b. o-mu-isiki mu-rwaire ti a-gend-a ku-kwat-a e-n-swa
c. Aug1-NPr1-girl NPr1-sick, not she-go-Fin to-catch-Fin Aug10-NPr10-termite
b. e-ki-ro.
c. Aug7-Npr7-night
d. A menstruating woman should not go gathering winged ants at night.
- (30) a. commandment: A menstruating woman should not go gathering winged ants at night.
b. violation: A menstruating woman goes to gather winged ants at night.
(b'. violative condition: If a menstruating woman goes gathering winged ants at night)
c. consequence: Winged ants will not come out from the holes of their anthills.
d. reason: A menstruating woman should not have to do hard work.

Gathering winged ants is tough work, as one would have to walk through the total darkness around three in the morning with a torch to light the path. When asked why a menstruating woman should not do this, the response was that winged ants will not come out from the holes of their anthill, because they are sensitive to the smell of blood. Although the causal connection between the smell of blood and winged ants is unclear to the author, people probably use this reason presumably to let women rest.

What is important here is that menstruation itself is not the excuse. Women's work is versatile and if they do not work because of menstruation, many things will stop and society will not function. Therefore, it seems that people consider certain things as taboos for which it is easy to find a seemingly

plausible reason to reduce women's tasks. However, there are other taboos relating to women's menstruation that are not as easy to understand, as in (31) and (32).

(31) a. Omwisíkí t'agurúká amagúru ga jîna álí omukwê:zi.

b. o-mu-isiki ti a-guruk-a a-ma-guru ga jîna

c. Aug1-NPr1-girl, not she-strides.over-Fin Aug6-NPr6-leg of6 her.mother

b. a-li o-mu-ku-ezi.

c. she-is[SubjRel] Aug18-NPr16-Npr15-month

d. A menstruating woman should not stride over the legs of her mother sitting on the ground.

(32) a. commandment: A menstruating woman should not stride over the legs of her mother sitting on the ground.

b. violation: A menstruating woman strides over the legs of her mother sitting on the ground.

(b'. violative condition: If a menstruating woman strides over the legs of her mother sitting on the ground)

c. consequence: Her mother dies.

d. Reason: ?

The Nyoro society attaches weight to seniority. Hence, children must obey their fathers and mothers. It is normally impossible, from this standpoint, that a daughter would stride over the legs of her mother sitting on the ground, stretching the legs, regardless of whether or not the daughter is menstruating. When asked for the reason, people say that 'it is to avoid imbruing the mother with menstrual blood'. It

is important to note that only old women sit on the ground and stretch their legs in the first place.¹⁷ Young women do not sit on the ground stretching their legs. Men, who sit on a chair, do not sit on the ground either. Therefore, only elderly women can be targeted to stride over. Interpreted symbolically, it could be an opposition between young women who menstruate and older menopausal women, reflecting that one should not nullify the hierarchical relationship.

Other taboos concerning striding, such as (33), are easy to understand.

- (33) a. Omusáidža t'agurúká omwá:ná wê.
b. o-mu-saidža ti a-guruk-a o-mu-ana u-e.
c. Aug1-NPr1-man not he-stride.over-Fin Aug1-NPr1-child PPr1-his
d. A man should not stride over a child sleeping on the floor.
- (34) a. commandment: A man (i.e. father) should not stride over a child sleeping on the floor.
b. violation: A man strides over a child sleeping on the floor.
(b'. violative condition: If a man strides over a child sleeping on the floor)
c. consequence: The child will die or get silly.
d. reason: If you stride over children, you may accidentally step on them, which must be avoided.

After spending much time in Africa, the author reflected on the hidden reasons behind the taboo expressions and noticed that many stem from the notion of being careful about certain things in daily

¹⁷ For the reason, they say that many old women have leg joint problems.

life or a society's accepted conventions and manners. Generally speaking, these taboos can be understood from a functionalist or pragmatic viewpoint, as a major means of controlling people's actions in a traditional society.

8. Making conventional deeds taboo

In the previous section, some examples, such as (32), have hidden reasons that are difficult to discern. However, there are many taboos, which we can call customary, for which we do not necessarily need to search for a hidden reason, such as example (35).

- (35) a. Omukázi obu á:bá azáire, t'ályá é:nswâ rû:ndi enkó:lê.
 b. o-mu-kazi obu a-ba-a a-za:r-ire, ti a-li-a
 c. Aug1-NPr1-woman when she-is-Fin she-bear-Perf not she-eat-Fin
 b. e-n-swa rundi e-n-ko:le.
 c. Aug10-NPr10-termite or Aug10-NPr10-cowpea
 d. A woman should not eat winged ants nor cowpeas after delivery (for about three months).
- (36) a. commandment: A woman should not eat winged ants or cowpeas after delivery (for about three months).
 b. violation: A woman eats winged ants or cowpeas after delivery (within about three months).
 (b'. violative condition: If a woman eats winged ants or cowpeas after delivery (within about three months)
 c. consequence: The woman will have a stomach ache and her belly will swell.
 d. reason: customary

We do not find an hidden reason in (36d),¹⁸ but it is equipped with a commandment, violation, and consequence, as shown in (36a,b,c). Judging from this we may say that the essential elements that constitute a taboo in Nyoro are commandment, violation, and consequence, and although the reason is found in many of them, it can be dispensed with for what is called customary or conventional. More properly, we can say that all taboo expressions have four constituents, namely: commandment, violation, consequence, and reason. For some, however, the hidden reason is lost throughout the course of history. In these cases, the taboos are called customary or conventional. Therefore, for them, being customary or conventional has become their existential reason. The existence of these taboo expressions seems to indicate that they represent diverse conduct regulations in daily life or cultural norms in the broad sense of the word.

Example (37) is a tabooization of a customary practice concerning wedding arrangements.

(37) a. Omukázi obu aswé:rwâ, bamutwa:ra hakasákâ nibamwegésá eby'a:mákâ.

b. o-mu-kazi obu a-swer-w-a, ba-mu-twar-a

c. Aug1-NPr1-woman when she-marry-Pass-Fin they2-her-take-Fin

b. ha-ka-saka ni ba-mu-eges-a e-bya a-ma-ka.

c. NPr18-NPr12-bush Prog they2-her-instruct-Fin Aug8-of8 Aug6-NPr6-house

d. When a woman gets married, they (i.e., women of the village) take her in the bush and
instruct her on domestic affairs.

¹⁸ We could find a reason in food science. If so, (35) will be categorized as an example with a hardly understandable hidden reason.

- (38) a. commandment: When a woman marries, women in the village take her in the bush and instruct her on domestic affairs.
- b. violation: When a woman marries, women in the village do not take her in the bush and do not instruct her on domestic affairs.
- (b'. violative condition: When a woman marries, if women of the village do not take her in the bush and do not instruct her on domestic affairs)
- c. consequence: The marriage will be broke and the bride's wealth must be returned.
- d. reason: customary

9. Form of commandment expressions

In this section, we check the expressive form of commandments in taboo expressions. Normally, commandment expressions use the general present tense for verbs, affirmative or negative. All the examples shown up to here follow this form. This general present tense expresses general truths, such as 'the earth turns' or 'water flows in the river'. Expressing human conduct in this form entails a compelling force that humans are intrinsically supposed to do certain things in the affirmative and that they should intrinsically avoid certain things in the negative. In addition to the general present verb tense, commandment expressions use the present form for the defective verb *-ina* 'have', followed by infinitives (English equivalent of 'have to'), as in (39), and the verb *okusemê:rra* 'to be supposed to do' in the perfective form, as in (40). Moreover, although fewer in number, some use the expressions 'there is no', as in (41), or 'it is bad to do', as in (42).

- (39) a. Omusáidza t'áina kulí:ra omusefulíyâ.
 b. o-mu-saidza ti a-ina ku-li-ir-a o-mu-sefuliya.
 c. Aug1-NPr1-man not he-has to-eat-Appl-Fin Aug18-NPr18-cooking.pan
 d. A man should not directly eat from a cooking pan.
- (40) a. T'osemerí:ré okusendekeréza pokozâ:ra.
 b. ti o-semerr-ire o-ku-sendekerez-a joko-za:ra.
 c. not you(sg.)-be.suposed-Perf Aug15-to-escort-Fin your.mother-in.law
 d. You (son-in-law) should not set your mother-in-law on her way.
- (41) a. Busáhó mú:ntu akwá:ta enkerê:mbe omumútwê oihiréhó jína.
 b. bu-sa ho mu-ntu a-kwat-a
 c. NPr14-nothing Clit16(there) NPr1-person he-touch-Fin[SubRel]
 b. e-n-kerembe o-mu-mu-twe o-ih-ire
 c. Aug9-NPr9-newborn.baby Aug18-NPr18-NPr3-head you(sg.)-remove-Perf
 b. hó jina.
 c. Clit16(there) its.mother
 d. There is nobody except the mother who touches the head of a newborn baby.
- (42) a. Kiba kíbí okwe▷mé:rra haigúru hakítú:ro eky'eitâka.
 b. ki-ba-a ki-bí o-ku-emerr-a ha-i-guru
 c. it7-be-Fin NPr7-bad Aug15-NPr15-stand-Fin NPr16-NPr5-above
 b. ha-ki-tu:ro e-kyá e-i-taka.
 c. NPr16-NPr7-grave Aug7-of7 Aug5-NPr5-soil
 d. It is bad to stand on a mounded grave.

10. Bad omens

An *ekisirâ:ni*, indicating ‘bad omen or ill presage’, resembles a taboo and instigates a certain hesitancy. Example (43) below appears to be a typical example of a bad omen.

- (43) a. Obu ó:bá n’o:rubátá orugê:ndo, embéba t’efwanganízà omuhâ:nda.
 b. obuo-ba-a ni o-rubat-a o-ru-gendo e-m-beba
 c. when you(sg.)-be-Fin Prog you(sg.)-walk-Fin Aug11-NPr11-journey Aug9-NPr9-rat
 b. ti e-ƒwanganiz-a o-mu-handa.
 c. not it9-cross-Fin Aug3-NPr3-road
 d. When you embark on a journey, a rat should not cross the road.
- (44) a. commandment: A rat should not cross the road when you embark on a journey.
 b. violation: A rat crosses the road when you embark on a journey.
 (b’. violative condition: If a rat crosses the road when you embark on a journey)
 c. consequence: You will be involved in an accident.
 d. reason: ?

If the bad omen in (43) would have the same logical structure as taboos, it will be similar to (44).

However, there is one big difference in that an uncontrollable event, that is a rat crossing the road, may arise in it. With taboos, one can decide what to do regardless of whether one observes the commandment or not (i.e., sit on the cooking stove or not, or sit on the ground with bended legs or not). However, with bad omen, one can of course decide whether to continue the journey or not, but the person has no control

over a rat crossing the road. The author thinks that it is quite characteristic of bad omens or ill presage that things that are out of one's control occur. Moreover, the hidden reason for this prohibition is unclear.

Similarly, in example (45), an uncontrollable event that an owl hoots on the rooftop at night occurs. It is also a bad omen. The Nyoro people, when hearing an owl hoot at the top of their house, immediately throw a burning stick to chase it away.

(45) a. Ensindizi t'efúrá ekíró é:rí haigúru y'é:ndzú.

b. e-n-sindizi ti e-ʃur-a e-ki-ro e-ri ha-i-guru

c. Aug9-NPr9-owl not it9-cry-Fin Aug7-NPr7-night it9-is[SubRel] NPr16-NPr5-above

b. ya e-n-dzu.

c. of9 Aug9-NPr9-house

d. A owl should not hoot on the rooftop at night.

(46) a. commandment: An owl should not hoot on the rooftop at night.

b. violation: An owl hoots on the rooftop at night.

(b'. violative condition: If an owl hoots on the rooftop at night)

c. consequence: Someone in the house will die.

d. reason: ?

As in (43) and (45), animals often appear as things that have nothing to do with one's intentions. However, not all animal appearances are bad omens. The dog in example (47) is not a bad omen, but a taboo because you can ensure that a dog does not go into the bed.

- (47) a. É:mbwá t'ebyá:má omukitábu ky'omû:ntu.
 b. e-m-bwa ti e-byam-a o-mu-ki-tabu kya o-mu-ntu
 c. Aug9-NPr9-dog not it9-sleep-Fin Aug18-NPr18-NPr7-bed of7 Aug1-NPr1-person
 d. A dog should not sleep in a person's bed.
- (48) a. commandment: You should distance a dog so that it may not sleep in your bed.
 b. violation: A dog sleeps in your bed.
 (b'. violative condition: If a dog sleeps in your bed)
 c. consequence: You will have an accident or be bitten by a snake.
 d. reason: Dogs may have disease-causing germs, as they eat faeces or rats. Therefore, one should keep them away from the bed, which must be kept clean.

Next, let us examine example (49) in which a bird appears, and which might be thought of as an example of a bad omen. However, the author sees it as a taboo expression. The point is to discern what is meant by the expression.

- (49) a. Ekijóni tikirábá hagátí omú:ndzû.
 b. e-ki-ŋ-oni ti ki-rab-a ha-gati o-mu-n-dzû.
 c. Aug7-NPr7-NPr9-bird not it7-pass-Fin Aug16-centre Aug18-NPr18-NPr9-house
 d. A bird should not fly through a house.

- (50) a. commandment: You should not leave the doors of your house open.
- b. violation: You leave the doors of your house open.
- (b'. violative condition: If you leave the doors of your house open)
- c. consequence: A family member dies.
- d. reason: The doors of the house must be properly kept closed to ensure that thieves or burglars may not enter.

The author understands that a bird flying through the house means that the doors of the house are not properly closed. If this is regarded as representing an event of major force, one might take it as a bad omen. However, one can prevent a bird from flying through the house. This does not mean to control birds but the doors so that such a thing does not occur. If one does not control the situation, a horrible consequence will occur: a family member dies. This is the essence of taboos.

Sometimes, people are also out of our control. In example (51), when someone visits you, it is up to them whether they will bring you a gift or what gift they bring. If a person visits you empty-handed, it is a bad omen.

- (51) a. Omugéni obu aídžá, atáina kí:ntu kyô:na, tibamusá:rrá enkôko.
- b. o-mu-geñi obu a-idž-a, a-ta-ina ki-ntu ki-ona,
- c. Aug1-NPr1-visitor when he-come-Fin he-not-have[SubRel] NPr7-thing PPr7-any,
- b. ti ba-mu-sar-ir-a e-n-koko.
- c. not they2-him-slaughter-for-Fin Aug9-NPr9-chicken
- d. When a visitor comes empty-handed, you should not slaughter a chicken.

- (52) a. commandment: When a person arrives at a visit, he/she should not come empty-handed.
- b. violation: A visitor comes empty-handed.
- (b'. violative condition: If a visitor comes empty-handed)
- c. consequence: Something bad may occur. Therefore, it is not necessary to slaughter a chicken as an offering to the guest.
- d. reason: ?

In the Nyoro society, when people visit, they usually bring whatever gift they could. This is a question of etiquette. Men normally bring bananas and women bring beans, millet, maize flour, etc.¹⁹ If people receive guests, they entertain them with a slaughtered chicken, but if a visitor comes empty-handed, they do not. Paying someone a visit without bringing anything is equivalent to a bad omen. The countervailing measure will be to keep talking to them until they leave without offering anything.

11. Is it all utilitarian?

One of the analytic characteristics in this paper is the consideration of loaded meanings in the logical analysis of taboo expressions. What are they, really? It is beneficial to understand the existential reasons for taboos, functionally or pragmatically, because there are so many of them to analyse.

At the same time, the author does not think that all taboos are understandable from these perspectives. For instance, in (53), the only way one can rationalise the reason why a woman should not dig a burial pit is to say that it is customary. In the Nyoro society, women are not supposed to come to

¹⁹ In the past, men usually brought local beer in a calabash, but that is rare now.

a grave until the dead body arrives at the burial pit. Women come to the grave accompanying the casket.

A symbolic analysis might reveal a causal correlation between the burial pits and women.

(53) a. Omwisíkí t'alímá ekitû:ro.

b. o-mu-isiki ti a-lim-a e-ki-tu:ro.

c. Aug1-NPr2-girl not she-dig-Fin Aug7-NPr7-burial.pit

d. A woman should not dig a burial pit.

(54) a. commandment: A woman should not dig a burial pit.

b. violation: A woman digs a burial pit.

(b'. violative condition: If a woman digs a burial pit)

c. consequence: Her parents die.

d. reason: customary

Also concerning death, there is a rule that a man has to sleep once with a woman other than his wife when he finishes mourning, as evidenced in (55). This can be considered a self-willed pretext for men's outlets of sexual desire. But can things be so cockeyed? When asked about women's case, people say that as women are immune to death uncleanness in the first place, they do not need to do such a thing. Indeed, as it is men who dig a burial pit or carry a casket and women do not. Hence, women are considered less unclean.

- (55) a. Omusáidza abya:ma n'omukázi murú:ndi gúmû kuturúka orúfû
 b. o-mu-saidza a-byam-a na o-mu-kazi mu-rundi gu-mu
 c. Aug1-NPr1-man he-sleep-Fin with Aug1-NPr1-woman NPr3-time NPr3-one
 b. ku-turuk-a o-ru-fu.
 c. to-go.out-Fin Aug11-NPr11-death
 d. A man must sleep once with a woman (other than his wife) to finish mourning.
- (56) a. commandment: A man must sleep once with a woman other than his wife to finish mourning.
 b. violation: A man does not sleep with a woman other than his wife to finish mourning.
 (b'. violative condition: If a man does not sleep with a woman other than his wife to finish mourning)
 c. consequence: The man has an unfortunate experience, such as a traffic accident.
 d. reason: A man must sleep once with a woman other than his wife to wash away the uncleanliness of death.

Let us look at an example of a cock in (57). If a cock crows at night, the father orders his child to slaughter it (for food). From a purely utilitarian point of view, eating the cock can be considered as an excuse, but this reasoning may not be suitable. Rather, it seems that a symbolic way of reasoning is more appropriate, as in (58d).

- (57) a. Enkóko empâ:ngi t'ekó:ká kurúga sá:ha é:mû kuhíka sá:ha munâ:na ez'e:kírô.
 b. e-n-koko e-m-pangi ti e-ko:k-a kuruga sa:ha e-mu
 c. Aug9-NPr9-chicken Aug9-NPr9-cock not it9-crow-Fin from hour NPr9-one
 b. kuhika sa:ha mu-na:na e-za e-ki-ro.
 c. till hour NPr3-eight Aug10-of10 Aug7-NPr7-night
 d. A cock must not crow in the night from 7pm to 2am.

- (58) a. commandment: A cock must not crow in the night from 7pm to 2am.
 b. violation: A cock crows in the night from 7pm to 2am.
 (b'. violative condition: If a cock crows in the night from 7pm to 2am)
 c. consequence: The head of the family dies.
 d. reason: Cocks are supposed to crow at the break of dawn. For them to crow in the night from 7pm to 2am is to disturb the order, which must be maintained.

Finally, example (59) is related to how a person ought to live in a community.

- (59) a. Obu osá:ngá ense:néne zigwî:re, ote:ra endú:rû abá:ntu báidǵé bazikwá:tê.
 b. obu o-sang-a e-n-se:nene zi-gu-ire, o-te:r-a
 c. when you(sg.)-find-Fin Aug10-NPr10-grasshopper they10-fall-Perf you(sg.)-beat-Fin
 b. e-n-du:ru a-ba-ntu ba-idǵ-e ba-zi-kwat-e.
 c. Aug9-NPr9-shout Aug2-NPr2-person they2-come-Subj they2-them10-catch-Subj
 d. When you find that grasshoppers have fallen on the ground, you ought to yell out so that people (of the village) come and catch them (together).

- (60) a. commandment: When you find that grasshoppers have fallen on the ground, you ought to yell out so that people (of the village) come and catch them (together).
- b. violation: You do not yell out when you find grasshoppers that have fallen on the ground.
- (b'. violative condition: When you find grasshoppers that have fallen on the ground and you do not yell out)
- c. consequence: You will be involved in an accident or bitten by a snake.
- d. reason: Grasshoppers are a Nyoro delicacy. They are to be shared by all people, not to be kept to oneself.²⁰

12. Conclusions

During the linguistic surveys in Africa, various texts were gathered, including Nyoro taboo expressions, which have never been documented in any research. Although the collected taboos are limited in number, a certain pattern began to emerge during the writing of this paper, that is, taboos are a major dynamic in regulating human conduct. They are a force that enables one to discipline oneself and take good care of others. They also play a major social role in traditional societies.²¹

With respect to the formal aspects of logical structure, taboo expressions in Nyoro have four indispensable constituents consisting of clauses with a subject and predicate, namely: commandments, violations, consequences, and reasons. Those expressed among the four are either the commandment

²⁰ Grasshoppers begin to appear in mid-November. For the Nyoro, they are a precious gift from the heavens that arrive before Christmas.

²¹ T. Yoneyama, a Japanese anthropologist, conducted a detailed study on taboos among the Tembo in the eastern part of the Congo (then Zaire), writing that 'the existence of a series of *kisira* gives a code of conducts to people' (Yoneyama 1990: 151). Yoneyama (1990) does not distinguish between taboos and bad omens. Instead, both are referred to as *kisira*, a Swahili word pronounced with a Tembo accent. In Tembo, it is called *músiró* (sg.), *mísiró* (pl.).

alone or the violation with the consequence. Both are not expressed at the same time, except in rare cases, as in (13). Either way is correct, but characteristically, many express the commandment alone, which can be either affirmative or negative (i.e., prohibition). The overwhelming majority are negative commandments, which is considered natural because taboos primarily aim to prohibit conducts.

What is most important is that taboos are always paired with scarring consequences. The process from violation to consequence represents a form of causal law by temporal development. However, a leap in logic emerges here, as this process hides the existential reasons for the taboos. Specifically, taboos necessarily have a real reason, which is hidden and never expressed, but which explains why it exists. Because of its hidden nature, it can be forgotten and lost over time. In this sense, customary taboos are those whose reason is lost and established as such.

In contrast to taboos, normal warnings like (18), which represent a prohibition and not a taboo, have a commandment, a violation, and a reason, but not a consequence. What is expressed overtly is usually the violation, as a violative condition, and the reason. This is a major difference between taboos and normal warnings.

Additionally, the Nyoro society has bad omens that are related to taboos. They declare that there are things one cannot control in this world and they teach how to handle them if they were to arise. They also play the role of aphorisms for one to live by in society.

Taboos are numerous in Nyoro,²² with diverse contents. They include a variety of topics, such as etiquette-like manners, things to avoid from a hygienic-physiological viewpoint, sexual matters, things related to conventions and customs (e.g. conducts that laws regulate in other societies), and others.

²² At present the author has collected and analysed 130 taboos and bad omens. However, the number seems to go far beyond 1,000.

As taboos are wide and subdivided into a range of topics, it is clear that the researcher cannot just use one approach of analysis. Japanese folklorists, for example, have intensively collected and analysed taboos, bad omens, ill presage, and auspices in Japan, under the category of folkloric belief (*zokushin*). Itabashi (1998) is an excellent example of such Japanese works. However, they take a symbolic way of analysis as much as possible.²³

The author, by contrast, first takes a practical and functional approach when analysing the reasons behind taboo expressions. Indeed, those related to etiquette-like manners and hygienic-physiological matters are easily understood from this perspective. In fact, analysing the taboo expressions of one ethnic group (numbering over 1,000) is impossible without such an approach. In this regard, as stated earlier, the author does not think it is beneficial, nor possible to analyse all taboos with a practical and functional approach. The interpretations must be done according to each case and in an integrated manner.

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²³ Concerning the contrast of day and night, Itabashi (1998: 105-106) noted that ‘when they ban to hang out laundry at night, it is sure that laundry will not dry easily and that it is not good because laundry may get wet with night dew. But these are weak as reasons to prohibit, because the prohibition does not come from a practical reason but from their sense of cultural order to distinguish between night and day, and night behaviours and daytime behaviours’.

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