

A NOTE ON AN APPARENT PROBLEM IN THE DESCRIPTION OF COPULA CONSTRUCTIONS IN KISWAHILI

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An adequate description of Kiswahili sentences would presumably include the following phrase structure rules, among others:

- (1) i. S \longrightarrow (NP) PdP
 ii. PdP \longrightarrow Aux VP (AP)
 iii. Aux \longrightarrow NPdup (ASP) TnS (AuxVb)
 iv. VP \longrightarrow $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{(Cop) (Pred)} \\ \text{V (NP) (Adv)} \end{array} \right\}$
 v. Pred \longrightarrow $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{:Adj} \\ \text{NP} \end{array} \right\}$
 vi. Cop \longrightarrow -wa, ni

Rules such as those in (1) would generate copula sentences like those in (2):

- (2) i. Walikuwa wagonjwa
 They were sick
 ii. Mlikuwa wageni
 You were visitors

It would seem, however, that the existence of sentences like (3) calls into doubt the adequacy of the phrase structure rules (1).

- (3) Juma hakuweza kufanya chochote ingawa alikuwa ni mkurugenzi.
 Juma was unable to do anything although he was the director.

Specifically, what is the constituent status of the underlined words in (3)? Are they both copulas? If so, what are they doing juxtaposed as they are?

Ashton (1944:264) points out that the word 'ni' may occur with '-wa' to express a temporary or some aspectual relation. Reviewing Ashton (*ibid.*) Closs (1967:106) wonders whether '-wa' in such a sentence as (3) is an auxiliary, i.e.

whether it is a helping verb and if so, can an auxiliary in Kiswahili occur without a main verb? Closs's answer is to regard '-wa' in such cases as the copula and 'ni' as a "a specifier of the copula relationship" (pp. 107). Accordingly, Closs's phrase structure rules (i.e. those which are relevant here) for copula introduction are given as follows:

(4) i. Cop \longrightarrow (...-w...) (Specifier) (6; pp. 115)

ii. Specifier \longrightarrow $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{ni} \\ \text{Vpf} \\ \text{ndio} \end{array} \right\}$ (7; *ibid.*)

(where Vpf = Subject Prefix)

The notion of "specifier" in Closs's analysis appears to be an interesting one and may well account for the subtle difference between, for instance, the (a) and the (b) sentences in (5):

- (5) a. Juma aliku *wa* mkurugenzi
 b. Juma aliku *wa* ni mkurugenzi

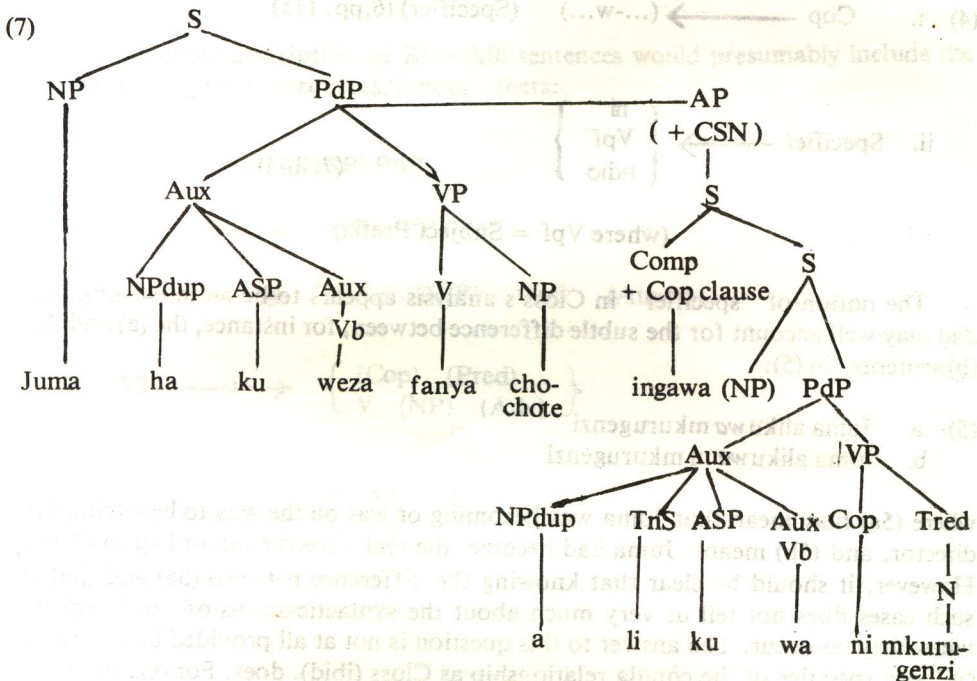
where (5a) may mean that Juma was becoming or was on the way to becoming the director, and (5b) means; Juma had become 'the real' director. according to Closs. However, it should be clear that knowing the difference between (5a) and (5b) in such cases does not tell us very much about the syntactic status of '-wa' and 'ni' when they co-occur. The answer to this question is not at all provided by regarding 'ni' as a specifier of the copula relationship as Closs (*ibid.*) does. For one thing the notion of 'ni' as a specifier appears completely irrelevant in cases such as those in (6):

- (6) i. Juma ni mkurugenzi
 Juma is the/a director
- ii. Juma ni mwalimu
 Juma is the/a teacher
- iii. Musa ni mgonjwa
 Musa is ill

What would it mean to say that in cases like (6) 'ni' specifier the copula relationship?

It is evident that the source of the apparent problem lies in the assumption (incorrect in my opinion) that when '-wa' and 'ni' co-occur, they both function as copulas as in (5b). I do not think that this is the case. Accordingly, I suggest that whenever 'ni' and '-wa' co-occur, 'ni' is always the copula and '-wa' its auxiliary. The question raised by Closs (*ibid.*) as to whether an auxiliary such as '-wa' in

Kiswahili can occur without a main verb ignores the fact that 'ni' may actually occupy the position of the main verb in cases like (5b). And this is exactly what would be expected in accordance with our phrase structure rule (1 iv.) which optionally expand the VP node into a copula plus a predicate. Accordingly, the constituent structure of a sentence like (3) can be given as (7):



References

- Ashton, E.O. 1944. *Swahili Grammar*. London: Longmans.
 Closs, E. 1967. "Some Copula Patterns in Swahili." *Swahili Journal*. No. 37
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CAUSATIVES IN KISWAHILI

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In the Bantu languages the causative is one of the (verbal-) extensions that may be formed from every verb. But to form a causative is more difficult than to form any other extension, e.g. the prepositional form. As a first step it is advisable to draw a distinction between primary and secondary causatives.

Primary Causatives

Primary causatives are formed by suffigating I, either directly to the verbal root or to one of its extensions. In earlier descriptions we find y, a semi-vowel, instead of i. The diacritics show that I/y are articulated rather closely. In the German Bantuistics - in accordance with Carl Meinhof - these i/y were termed "schwer" (hard, strong), transliterated as I, y. But Meinhof and van Warmelo were right where they did not translate this term literally but chose the term "close" vowel instead¹. The special feature of this close vowel is that it causes regular changes of the preceding consonant in Swahili and many other Bantu languages. This affects sound shift as well as mutual sound change. The latter is of importance when forming causatives in Swahili. In Swahili the following sound changes occur:

k	sh
t	s
p	fy
l	z
w	v
n	ny
nd	nz

Examples:

waka	"burn"	washa	"light"
anguka	"fall"	angusha	"fell"
tota	"sink"	tosa	"lower"
fuata	"follow"	fuasa	"cause to follow"
ogopa	"be afraid"	ogofya	"frighten"
apa	"swear"	afya	"cause to swear"
lala	"lie down"	laza	"cause to lie down"
*pola poa	"become cool"	poza	"make cool"
lewa	"get drunk"	levya	"Cause to get drunk"
*juwa juwa	"know"	juvya	"cause to know" ²
ona	"see"	onya	"cause to see,
panda	"go up"	panza	"cause to go up"

As may be seen from these examples, all the primary causatives are formed by suffigating *-ia/-ya* to the last consonant of the verb. It makes no difference whether the actual root of a verb is taken as a basis or whether an extension morpheme is already attached to it. Among the above-given examples the latter is the case with *anguka*, the intransitive of a conversive (reversive) extension of *anga* 'be suspended'; and with *ogopa*, a denominal verb of the adjective *oga* 'cowardly, timid'.

Secondary Causatives

I call those forms secondary causatives which are formed with the suffix *-esha* resp. *-isha*; e.g.

hama	"remove (from)	hamisha	"cause to remove
enda	"go"	endesha	"cause to go, drive"
shiba	"be satisfied with food"	shibisha	"satisfy, feed"
soma	"read"	somesha	"teach"
punga	"wave"	pungisha	"cause to wave"

According to the sound laws in Swahili *sh* is not an original phoneme in this language. As it has already been shown above, *sh* originated in *k + i* resp. *k + y*. Therefore the causative suffixes *-esha* and *-isha* must have originated in *-ekia* and *-ikia*. So we have to assume the following development for the above-mentioned examples:

<i>hama</i>	<i>hamika</i>	* <i>hamikia</i>	<i>hamisha</i>
<i>enda</i>	<i>endeka</i>	* <i>endekia</i>	<i>endesha</i>
<i>shiba</i>	<i>shibika</i>	* <i>shibikia</i>	<i>shibisha</i>
<i>soma</i>	<i>someka</i>	* <i>somekia</i>	<i>somesha</i>
<i>punga</i>	<i>pungika</i>	* <i>pungukia</i>	<i>pungisha</i>

The postulate forms on *-ika* or *-eka* are nothing else but the well-known extensions that denote a state of intransitivity and which Bantuists call ex. intransitives or statives or potentials. Therefore the original meaning of *shibika* is "be in the state of being satisfied with "food," and *someka* "be in the state of being read, be read, be readable." The causative forms *shibisha* or *somesha* denote the cause for this state. So *shibisha* originally means "cause the state of being read."

Therefore there was originally a difference between the causative of a primary verb and the one of the intransitive form of a verb. With some verbs both forms are still found. According to Roehl two derivations from '*lala*' (lie, sleep) exist: '*laza*' (lie flat) and '*lalisha*' (to cause to lie down)³. F. Johnson neither makes a distinction of meaning between these two forms nor between '*panza*' and '*pandishia*' (cause to go up). In the course of time primary causatives were no longer used and secondary causatives took their place⁴. With them the basic form of the verb - and no longer the intransitive form - is used to form the causative. This is why nowadays a speaker of Swahili thinks the suffix *-esha* and *-isha* to be the usual morphemes to form

causatives. This is also shown by the fact that *-esha* and *-isha* are used for forming denominal causatives, e.g. *tayarisha* "make ready, prepare" from *tayari* "ready, prepared, at hand". From the mass of verbal derivations one has to mention *zidisha* "cause to be greater, multiply," of which an intransitive form **zidika* is not used.

Therefore we may conclude that in modern Swahili the idea of causativity is expressed by the secondary forms in *isha*, *-esha* and that it is not necessary to refer back to an intransitive form as a link.

Forms ending in the transitive suffix - *eka*, - *ika*.

This suffix does not operate any more. The number of verbs formed with it is very small. The most important ones are the following:

andika "set in order, lay out, write", cp. *andaa* "prepare, put in order", no primary verb.

angika "hang up, suspend", primary verb *anga* "be suspended."

anika "set out to dry, expose to sun or air", no primary verb.

bandika "put on, stick on", primary verb *banda* no longer in use⁶; cp. B. *banda* "to flatten"⁷.

chomeka "stick, pierce," primary verb *choma* "pierce, stab"; *chomeka* with the meaning of "be pierced" is formed with the independent intransitive suffix.

eleka "carry astride on the hip"⁸, "carry on the back", probably a denominal form of B. *vele* "mama". Therefore *eleka* might have the meaning of "suckle (a child)" which coincides with Bourquin's B. *veleka* "carry (child) on the back (for the purpose of sucking)"

ezeka "thatch", no primary verb.

fundika "make a knot, tie up". Primary verb *funda* not used any more⁸ according to Sacleux borrowed from Zigula, Bonde and Shambala⁹, he also gives the work *Bundika*, cf. B. *kunda*.

funika "cover", no primary verb, cf B. *kuna*.

futika "put in the pocket, tuck in the girdle." Primary verb

- futa* “envelop, fold in” not used any more⁶, cp. B. *kuta*.
- imika* “give a downward direction to, let hand down”. Primary verb *ina* not used any more⁶, cp. B. *vina*.
- kandika* “cover the wooden framework of a hut with clay”, cp. *kanda* “knead with the hands, press and work with fingers.”
- limbika* “put aside until a thing increases, leave to increase”, no primary verb.
- loweka* “make wet,” cf. *lowa* “get wet, be soaked”, *loweka* with the meaning of “get wet” is formed with the independent intransitive suffix.
- pachika* “secure in a particular position, i.e. between two things”, cp. *pacha* “bear (grow) more than one shoot, growing in clusters.”
- peleka* “cause to go, send, move,” cp. B. *pela* “finish”. If this relationship exists, *peleka* may be “cause to disappear, help to disappear”. This might happen by sending or carrying someone or something away.
- simika* “cause to stand, establish”. *simika* with the meaning of “stand, be set up” is formed with the independent intransitive suffix. No primary verb; cp. B. *tima*.
- sindika* *shindika* “apply force to”, mostly in special contexts, e.g. *sindika mafuta* “extract oil by pressure,” *sindika mlango* “partly close the door” cf. *shinda*. *Sindika*, *shindika* with the meaning of “be overcome, be conquered” is formed with the independent intransitive suffix. The probable basic form is B. *kinda* “press, pound, overcome.”
- tambika* “make offering to propitiate the spirits of the dead and ask them not to trouble the living”, according to Sacleux x.v. borrowed from Zaramo, Zigula or neighbouring languages. cp. Swahili *tamba* “strut proudly, walk in a swaggering, conceited way” and B. *tamba* “stretch out.”
- tandika* “spread out, lay on, cover.” Primary verb *tanda* “extend, spread out”.

tapika "vomit, be sick", primary verb *tapa* "shiver, jump about convulsively." One may consider a relation with B. *tapa* "empty."

tapika only Sacleux s.v. mentions this word. According to him it is distinguished by an interdental from the preceding *tapika*. He only quotes it in connection with the example *tapika kisu* "put a knife at one's side between apron and skin."

twika for the meaning see *tweka*; more rarely used.

umika "cup, draw blood by cupping." Primary verb *uma* "bite, sting."

vika "clothe (with), cause to wear, dress." No primary verb; cf. Swahili *vaa* "clothe oneself, dress." This verb already contains the extension suffix *-ala*.

zika "bury." Roehl regarded this word as belonging to the verbal extension as given here.¹⁰ To me it seems more likely that here we do not find a suffix *-ika* which must have been suffigated to a root *z* + vowel, but with a basic bi-syllabic verb. Following Roehl's view one could think of a denominal form of **li*, but this causes semantic difficulties.

zindika "make firm, protect with a spell or charm." Primary verb *zinda* "be firm, stick fast"¹¹

The examples given above show that to some extent transitive forms may be constituted by the ending *-eka/-ika*. In most cases their meaning could be interpreted as being causative. But this confronts us with the question, whether one language makes use of two different morphemes in order to express the same idea. So on the grounds of these fundamental reflections, which also reach into the field of economy of language, it is doubtful whether the extension-suffixes B. *-ya* and *-eka/ika* which we have already dealt with always had the same meaning.

While in Swahili the suffixes *-eka/-ika* are possible only with a few verbs and are no longer working suffixes, which B. *-ya* still is insofar as it may be suffigated to every verb, both extensions, on the other hand, may be used as working suffixes in Southwest African languages. So in Herero ¹², e.g., we find:

<i>ronda</i>	"climb, ascend"
<i>rondisa</i>	(B. <i>londikya</i>) "make ascend"
<i>rondeka</i>	"help ascend, assist to ascend"
<i>raris</i>	"make (force to) sleep"
<i>rareka</i>	"cause to sleep, let sleep"

You could also translate *rareka* with 'help sleep'. So in Southwest African languages, a difference is made between the primary causative "cause to" and the form ending in *-eka/ -ika* which could be paraphrased by "help, help someone to (get) a thing". With latter forms the subject of the sentence is in any case the active part which helps the desired event or intended process to take place. With the primary causative the subject may be the active part, but there may also be a mediator. If you say "the teacher makes the windows to be closed," the teacher usually is only the inducer who causes the window to be closed, the work on the other hand is done by the pupils.

Surely the meanings of cause and assistance are close to one another. Sometimes they may even be nearly identical. cf The sentence "the teacher helps with closing the windows", the teacher may only have caused this action at first (e.g. by giving an order). Afterwards he may have assist in doing so, in order to achieve the aim, i.e. the closing of the windows. If one takes into account the closehess of meaning of these two actions one can understand that the semantic difference had not always been realized and that, therefore, the general term 'causative' seemed to be the proper one. But after having understood the difference one should express it in terminology — especially in those Bantu languages that have both extensions. That is why I have proposed (as far back as 1957) to term the forms ending in *-eka/ -ika* **adjutivum**.¹³

We may also apply our understanding of the forms in Herero to the already mentioned examples of Swahili. There a causative from *vaa* "put on, dress," namely *valisha* or *visha* (B. *vikya*¹⁴) meaning "cause to wear, give clothes to" may be formed. The original meaning of the 'Adjutivum' (adjutive) *viḱa* would be "help dress" about which Johnson s.v. remarks ' *vika* is used rather in the sense to provide with clothes, i.e. clothe habitually.' So he has also seen a semantic difference between the causative forms *valisha* resp. *visha* and the adjutive *vika*, nevertheless he translates both of them with "cause to wear." In the course of time the difference between causative and adjutive may have been lost to the average Swahili speaker or he may no longer feel it. But one should try as far as the given examples are concerned to work it out at least for the time of origin of these forms. Looking only at the form the adjutive suffix in Swahili is like the intransitive suffix *eka/ -ika*. But when we come to their function and origin they have nothing in common: this is shown beyond any doubt by Southwest African languages. Vowel harmony which is found in these languages under certain conditions occurs with the adjutive, but not with the intransitive¹⁵. Finally one could try to look for a possible etymology of the adjutive-suffix *-eka/ -ika*. As is shown by Southwest African Bantu languages one has to assume that *-eka* is the primary form¹⁶. Probably the present day morphemes were originally words with a concrete meaning. It is likely that this also applies to the adjutive-suffix *-eka*, about which Meinhof writes when surveying Bantu languages and referring especially to vowel assimilation of this ending in Herero¹⁷: "It may therefore have been an independent verb originally (cf. Swahili - *weka* "place" for instance), which has become a verb-ening. Through assimilation this *-eka* often becomes *-ika*."

Another problem that I cannot deal with here is whether *weka* itself is a contraction of **waika*. Dempwolff postulated an Eastern-Bantu root *vaika* "put by,

keep.” But he also mentioned *ikā* “put, place”¹⁸. So one may think *vaika* to be the adjective of B. *va* “be” and translate it literally with “be and put.” However, the last word has not yet been spoken about this whole matter¹⁹.

- 1) Meinhof, G. and N.J. van Warmelo, *Introduction to the Phonology of the Bantu Languages*, Berlin 1932, p. 25.
- 2) *juvya* is rarely used and sometimes has the meaning of “make impertinent, provoke to or teach impertinence,” cf. F. Johnson, *A. Standard Swahili-English Dictionary*, s.v. Generally the causatives *juza* or *julisha* are used in analogy to verbs in which an original *l* has been suppressed (and not a *w*), as in *toa* e.g.
- 3) Roehl, K., *Wegweiser in die Suaheli-Sprache*, 4th impression, Rugenwalde 1940, p. 198.
- 4) The same process may be observed in German. The primary causatives that are formed by ‘ablaut’, e.g. *trinken-tranken*; *senken-senken*, are numerically restricted and are no longer formed from other verbs. Now the causative meaning is paraphrased with the verb ‘*veranlassen*’ instead.
- 5) A parallel case to this observation is the ending *-iza*, e.g. *himiza* “hasten, hurry, cause to be done quickly.” This is a direct extension of the original noun *hima* “energy, urgency,” which in Swahili is also used as an adverb meaning “quickly, hastily.” As the ending *-iza* had originated in *-ilya*, one may expect to find a prepositional form **himi[i]a* as a link. It does not exist in Swahili, however.
- 6) According to F. Johnson, *Standard Swahili-English Dictionary*, s.v.
- 7) B * ‘Urbantu.’ These forms are quoted according to W. Bourquin, *Neue Ur-Bantu-Wortstämme*, Berlin 1923.
- 8) According to Johnson.
- 9) Sacleux, Ch., *Dictionnaire Swahili-Français*, Paris 1939/41, s.v.
- 10) Loc. Cit., p. 210.
- 11) W. Bourquin quotes in his article “*Weitere Ur-Bantu-Wortstämme*” [*Afrika und Uebersee* XXXVIII, 1953/54, p. 35] the root *kilika* “to treat with medicines.” This cannot have become *zindika* in Swahili since that form should have originated in **lindika*. However, as *ad* and *l* appear to be allophones (e.g. *panda* and *pa [l] a* “ascend”), there might be another form B. **kindika*. The fact that Swahili *zindika* and B. **kilika* have the same meaning should lead to further investigations.
- 12) Volschenk, Ph. A., *Herero. A. Morphological Survey*. Thesis for the degree M.A. in the Faculty of Arts, University of Cape Town. Windhoek 1968 (not yet printed), p. 108.
- 13) Compare the Supinum adjunctum of the Latin verb *adjuvare* “help, assist.” As the French term for a causative form in Amharic M. Cohen uses *adjudatif* (*Traite de langue amharique*, Paris 1936, p. 208 ff)
- 14) Here the intransitive-suffix *-ika* is taken as a basis.
- 15) Vowel harmony means the assimilation of the final Vowel to the Vowel of the verbal root. To a certain extent this took place in Swahili, too, cp. M. Heepe, *Alte Verbalformen mit vollstandiger Vokalassimilation im Suaheli. Zeitschrift für Kolonialsprachen* IX, 1918/19, p. 118—125. There you may find the following examples on page 120: Kumwonopi “where did you see him?” Simwono kende Tanga “I have seen him, he has gone to Tanga.” You can find vowel-harmony also in Koromo: With regard to dialects on Zanzibar cf. W.H. Whiteley, “An Introduction to the rural dialects of Zanzibar.” *Swahili* XXX, p. 56 ff.
- 16) cp. Meinhof - van Warmelo, l.c., p. 129.
- 17) cp. Meinhof - van Warmelo, l.c., p. 44.
- 18) Dempwolff, O., *Ostbantu Wortstämme, Zeitschrift für Kolonialsprachen* VII, 1916/17, s.v.
- 19) I have dealt with the problem of the adjective with regard to several Bantu languages in my article “Die sogenannten Kausativa auf *-eka* in Bantusprachen”, *Afrika und Uebersee* XLII, 1958, p. 173—178.