

The Morphosyntactic and Semantic Basis of Diminution and Augmentation in Shinyiha

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Abstract

Among the strategies used to express diminution and augmentation in Bantu languages is the use of particular prefixes in the Bantu Languages' Noun Class System. Being one of the Bantu languages, Shinyiha has its ways of forming diminutives and augmentatives. Some of the ways coincide with those found in other Bantu languages. Yet other ways are unique to Shinyiha. To explore how diminution and augmentation processes are effected and their semantic basis in Shinyiha is the concern of this paper. The paper offers a description and discussion of diminution and augmentation in terms of what noun classes are used as well as what the diminutives and augmentatives mean in Shinyiha. In summary, the paper is concerned with the morphosyntactic and semantic basis of the two processes i.e. how the processes are morphosyntactically and semantically realized. Guérois, et al (2017) 'Parameters of Bantu morphosyntactic variation' are used to inform this paper, accounting for the morphosyntactic aspects of the paper. To explain the semantic basis of diminution and augmentation, Construal Operations proposed by Croft & Cruse (2004) are used. The findings indicate that in Shinyiha diminution is expressed by noun classes 7/8 and 12/13. On the other hand, augmentation is expressed by noun classes 3/4 and 5/6. In each case different meanings are expressed in addition to diminution and augmentation. It is concluded that diminution and augmentation have semantic basis as they form part of human communication strategies.

Key words: *Shinyiha, augmentation, diminution, morphosyntax, meaning*

Introduction

Shinyiha is one of the Bantu languages spoken in Tanzania particularly in Mbozi District in Songwe Region. In Guthrie's Bantu language classification, Shinyiha (also called Nyiha) is categorized as M 23 which means it is in Zone M, Group 20 (Nyika-Safwa Group) and it appears as language number 3 in that group. In another classification, Shinyiha falls under Nyasa-Tanganyika group (see LOT, 2009: xi). In the latter classification, Shinyiha belongs to the Mwika sub-group together with Safwa, Pimbwe, Fipa, Nyamwanga, Bembe, Tongwe and Bende. According to the *Mradi wa Lugha za Tanzania* (Languages of Tanzania Project) (2009), Shinyiha is recorded to have 275,864 speakers. This number of speakers is smaller than that recorded by SIL International (2009) referring to

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the Ethnologue of 1988 which showed that the number of Shinyiha speakers was 306,000. This is indicative that determining the number of speakers of a language is methodologically challenging.

Quoting SIL International (2009), Asheli (2013) reports that Shinyiha is spoken in some parts of Zambia and Malawi in addition to Tanzania. That geographical dispersal makes Shinyiha a cross-border language. This paper deals with the Shinyiha spoken in Tanzania as a matter of focus.

In this paper, I present the processes diminution and augmentation in this language. The purpose of the paper is to demonstrate that these two linguistic processes are morphosyntactically and semantically motivated. I will also show that the processes are effected by the noun class-system, which is characteristic of Bantu languages. It will be observed that this paper attempts to show the noun classes involved in effecting the augmentation and diminution processes. This is of particular interest because there are noun classes involved in augmentation and diminution that match with those involved in other Bantu languages. There are yet noun classes that are specific to Shinyiha. It is hoped that the paper will further the already existing scholarly discussion on augmentation and diminution in Shinyiha in particular and Bantu languages in general. It will be interesting to discuss why the realms of diminution and augmentation are manifest in different noun classes. The semantics associated with diminution and augmentation in different classes will be discussed. The semantics of the two processes is deemed important because the processes are part of communication. People opt to use augmentation and diminution to achieve their communicative agenda. These are important to understand as part of the general attempt to understand human communication and meaning delivery which human languages attempt to achieve.

The parameters of Bantu morphosyntactic variation developed by Guérois, et al (2017) are used as an important framework during the discussion of the two concepts. It is expected that these parameters will handle the morposyntactic side of the paper. Construal operations developed by Croft & Cruse (2004) are used to handle the semantic aspects of diminution and augmentation. Before detailed discussion on diminution and augmentation is made, it is important, at this point, to define the concepts ‘diminution’ and ‘augmentation.’

Meaning of Diminution and Augmentation

Writing on Sisumbwa nouns, Kahigi (2005) puts diminutives and augmentatives into the category of what he calls secondary noun classification. He calls them secondary because they are formed as a result of shifting nouns into different classes. Kahigi (ibid) says augmentatives and diminutives are achieved by adding augmentative and diminutive sense to the existing nouns. That generally means that augmentatives and diminutives are effected by particular prefixes and not others. Since change in prefixes results in the formation of augmentatives and diminutives, we may say the two have semantic motivation but they are manifested morphosyntactically. The following are further details.

Diminution

According to Crystal (1997), the term *diminutive* refers to an affix with the general meaning of 'little.' In almost similar manner, Matthews (2007) defines the term *diminutive* as something that indicates small size. This definition is shared by Gibson, et al (2017) who say that apart from expressing small size, diminutives are used to express other meanings like endearment, pejoration and amelioration. Matthews (2007) gives *piglet* as a diminutive of *pig*, in which case, the suffix *-let* is actually the diminutive. Crystal and Matthews are in consensus because they show that diminutive meaning is expressed by affixation i.e. there are affixes that show diminution. Gibson, et al (2017) mention a number of ways of forming diminutives including using independent words and the use of noun classes prefixes.

In this paper, diminution will be referred to as a process of expressing something so that it looks smaller, lower in status or nice by using an affix or any other means. The thing expressed may not naturally be small or lower in status. It may rather be intended to be construed smaller, lower in status or nice by the speaker. In terms of size, the thing expressed may really be small. When something is naturally perceived small or lower in status, diminution will be an attempt of the speaker to make hearers perceive the referent as such. In short, diminution is motivated by the need of the speaker to express the way something is or it is the attempt of the speaker to belittle something so that it appears smaller or lower in status than it actually is. Sometimes, diminution is the attempt of the speaker to appreciate how beautiful or ugly something is. Whether something will be perceived to be lower in status or nice depends on the prefixes used. This paper will be discussing these aspects among others in Shinyiha.

Augmentation

The term *augmentative* is actually the opposite of *diminutive*. Matthews (2007) defines augmentative as an affix primarily indicating large or larger size. The author gives the example of *-one* in Italian in the word *cassone* to mean 'large case, chest, etc.' Here, like in the English example given under diminution, augmentation in Italian is expressed by affixes. Kahigi (2005) says augmentation implies unusually large size or abnormal /extraordinary character. What this generally means is that augmentation is to do with making something sound big or abnormal in some way. In this paper, I will use the word *augmentation* to refer to the process of making something to be construed larger. Like diminution, augmentation is sometimes concocted by the speaker. This gains support from Morshed (2018) who says that augmentatives may contain affective meaning, especially, a negative connotation. This means augmentation goes beyond expressing size.

Quoting Dressler and Barbaresi (1994), Morshed (2018) observes that augmentatives represent a marked category to mean they are not as common as diminutives are. However, this needs further exploration especially in Bantu languages where there are noun classes for the augmentatives.

Diminution and Augmentation in the World Languages

Studies show that diminution and augmentation are important processes in the world languages. Studies also show that different languages form the two processes using different strategies. There are languages that use suffixation. For example, German, as Frankl (1994) reports, expresses diminutive meaning by means of *-chen* and *-lein*. Frankl (ibid) also mentions *-let* as a way of expressing diminutive meaning in English. There are as well prefixing languages (where most Bantu languages that use noun classes belong). Despite the differences across languages, the two processes are not a new phenomenon. This gains support from Gibson, et al (2017) who point out that diminutives, for example, have a long tradition of study. The fact that Gibson, et al (2017) survey 48 languages on how they demonstrate the way diminutives are formed is indicative that diminutives and augmentatives are very pervasive in different languages.

Writing on the same topic, Morshed (2018) observes that there are striking similarities in the process of augmentativization between English and Bangla. The similarities observed here are in that both the languages use affixation in the construction of augmentatives.

Morshed (ibid) continues to report that English and Bangla employ prefixation to form a good number of augmentative vocabulary. The author confesses that suffixation in augmentativization is very marginal in both the languages. In addition, according to Morshed (ibid), English and Bangla also make use of compounding to form augmentatives. This generally shows that languages differ and coincide in the ways they form diminution and augmentation. This entails that exploration of an individual language like Shinyiha may demonstrate how the language being studied is like or different from others.

Diminution and Augmentation in Various Bantu Languages

Gibson, et al (2017) say that studies on diminution is a long-standing tradition as diminutives have been variously discussed. This study and others have shown that diminutive and augmentative meanings are expressed by noun classes among other means in Bantu languages. Using Hendrikse and Poulos' (1992) table of Bantu noun classes, Katamba (2003) shows that different noun classes have different semantic content. In Hendrikse and Poulos' table referred to by Katamba (2003), augmentatives and diminutives are shown to occupy a number of noun classes. As for augmentatives, it is classes 5, 7, 12, 20 and 21 that are used. On the other hand, diminutives are expressed by classes 12, 19 and 20.

When talking about noun classes, Maho (1999: 51) presents a table on possible set of noun classes and noun prefixes in Proto-Bantu. In the table referred to by Maho (1999: 51), augmentatives are expressed by classes 5, 7, 20 and 21. By contrast, diminutives are expressed by classes 7/8, 12/13, 19 and 20. These different classes for the same processes indicate that languages vary in the way they express diminutive and augmentative meanings. This calls for the need to study diminution and augmentation further in as many Bantu languages as possible to get a general picture of the two processes in such languages.

Gibson et al (2018) observe that there are Bantu languages that express diminutives using noun class prefixes. They mention classes 12/13, 19 or 7/8 as classes that express diminution in Bantu languages especially the central Bantu area. These scholars also observe that there are languages that make use of *mwana* 'child' or 'offspring' in expressing diminutives especially the languages in the South and Northwest Africa. Moreover, Gibson et al (2018) identify languages that use the prefix *-ana* to express diminutives. All these

are indicative that languages make use of a variety of strategies in expressing diminution.

In Kiswahili, according to Frankl (1994), one has to distinguish between diminutive nouns on the one hand and nouns denoting insignificance on the other. The author goes on to say that the difference is of a semantic as well as a morphological nature. This suggests that, diminution and augmentation are semantically motivated but realized morphologically. In addition, Frankl (ibid) asserts that diminutives and augmentatives are effected by re-assigning the nouns to relevant noun classes. He mentions Noun Class 7 (singular) or 8 (plural) as the classes for diminution. He gives the stem *-toto* 'child' which becomes *kitoto/vitoto* 'young child/young children' as an example. Frankl (ibid) goes on to argue that if a polysyllabic root begins with *ki-* the diminutive will be *kiji-*. He argues that it is expressed that way to presumably avoid *kiki-* sequence. For this, the author gives some examples, one of which is the diminutive for the word *kitabu* 'book' to be *kijitabu* 'booklet'. What is obvious in this case is that noun classes 7/8 are used to express diminutive meaning in Kiswahili.

Apart from expressing diminution, Frankl (ibid) shows that Noun classes 7/8 are used to express the sense of being insignificant. This then shows that diminutives express additional meaning beyond size. In other words, it shows that something is of lower status than something else. Frankl illustrates his argument about the concept of insignificance by giving an example of the diminutives of the words *mti* 'tree' to be *kijiti* 'stick' since *kijiti* is perceived insignificant in comparison with *mti* 'tree'. He also gives the insignificant form of *mtoto* 'child' to be *kijitoto* 'a small helpless child'. Additionally, Frankl gives *vijipesa* 'small amount of money' as the diminutive form of *pesa* 'money' in the sense of insignificance.

As for the formation of augmentative meaning in Kiswahili, Frankl (1994) lists a number of ways responsible. He goes on to demonstrate that one of the ways of forming the augmentative of a noun with a disyllabic stem starting with a consonant is the use of a zero prefix in singular and *ma-* prefix in plural. He gives an example of the stem *-toto* 'child' which gives *toto* 'a large child' and *matoto* 'large children'. Frankl (ibid) also observes that the augmentative for the stem which is monosyllabic, or disyllabic but the one commencing with a vowel, the prefix is that of proto-Bantu class 21 (i.e. *ji-* or *j-*) in the singular, with a double prefix (*maji-* or *maj-*) in the plural. He, then gives the example of the stem *-oka* which, he says gives *joka* 'a

large serpent', *majoka* 'large serpents'. For a monosyllabic stem *-tu* gives *jitu* 'giant', *majitu* 'giants'.

Talking about augmentatives involving pre-nasalized stops in Swahili [b], [d], [t], [d̥] and [g], Frankl (ibid) says the nasal is omitted to give words such as *buzi* 'large goat from *mbuzi*, 'a goat'; *dovu* 'large elephant from *ndovu*, 'an elephant' and *goma* 'large drum' from *ngoma* 'drum'.

In summary, Kiswahili has a variety of strategies for augmentation. Although Frankl does not say it, the fact is that augmentatives in Kiswahili are expressed by noun classes 5/6. That means, before being augmentatives, nouns are assigned to other noun classes. For example, the noun *ngoma* 'drum' will demonstrate agreement patterns of classes 9/10. A sentence like *Ngoma nzuri imetengenezwa leo* 'A good drum has been made today' follows patterns of class 9 whose characteristic feature is having a nasal as a prefix. By contrast, the augmented noun *goma* follows class 5/6 agreement pattern. For example, the sentence, *Goma zuri limetengenezwa leo* 'A big drum has been made today' follows class 5 agreement pattern as manifested by *-li-*.

In Sisumbwa, according to Kahigi (2005) augmentation is expressed by class 5/6 whose prefixes are *lii-/li-* and *maa-*. Kahigi gives examples of augmentation achieved by adding class 5/6 prefixes to nouns that primarily belong to other classes. Some of these examples include the following.

From Class 1

liimuntu 'unusually large/abnormal person' *maamuntu*

ikiima/likiiima 'unusually large woman' *makiima*

igoosya/ligoosya 'unusually large/extraordinary man' *magooosya*

From Class 3/4

liimuti 'huge tree/huge piece of wood' *maamiti*

liimusila 'huge tail' *maamisila*

liimuyeebha 'huge rope (for tying cows)' *maamiyeebha*

(Kahigi, 2005: 133)

Kahigi (2005) shows that class 5/6 prefixes can freely be attached to nouns originally belonging to other classes to form augmentatives. In all cases, as Kahigi shows, the resulting nouns have the sense of

‘huge/large or unusual’. But size prevails in all examples. So in Sisumbwa, the sense of ‘big/large/huge’ dominates.

In Sisumbwa, according to Kahigi (2005), diminution is expressed by Class 12/13 whose prefixes are *ka-* and *tu-*. The resulting nouns have the sense of ‘small’. Some of the examples of diminutives in Sisumbwa given by Kahigi include the following:

From Class 1

kaamuntu ‘small person’ *tuumuntu*

kakiima ‘small woman’ *tukiima*

kagoosya ‘small man’ *tugoosya*

From Classes 3/4

kaamuti ‘small tree’ *tuumiti*

kaamusila ‘small tail’ *tuumisila*

kaamuyeebha ‘small rope (for tying kids)’ *tuumiyeebha*

(Kahigi, 2005: 135)

According to Kahigi (2005), apart from expressing smallness, the class 13 prefix *tu-* is used to express the sense of ‘small amount of ...’ when referring to liquids or quantities.

In summary, Sisumbwa expresses augmentation and diminution by using classes 5/6 and 12/13 respectively. As will be evident in this paper, Shinyiha has additional classes for the same processes.

Diminution in Shinyiha

In Shinyiha, diminutive meaning is expressed by noun classes and in some cases by the word ‘-ana’ which means ‘small’ or ‘young’. For the word –ana, the following are examples.

Table1: Diminution Involving –ana in Shinyiha

Noun (normal)	Gloss	Diminutive	Gloss
<i>Imbuzi</i>	goat	<i>i-n-yana mbuzi</i> Aug-9-child goat	a small/young goat
<i>Inkuku</i>	Hen	<i>i-n-yana nkuku</i> Aug-9-hen	a small/young hen
<i>Imbwa</i>	Dog	<i>In-yana mbwa</i> Aug-child dog	a small/young dog (puppy)

In Table 1, *-ana* is used to form diminution. However, that strategy does not apply to all nouns in Shinyiha. There are, for example, nouns which have totally different words to express the sense of young or small. The word *ing'ombe* 'cow' has *ingwada* which means 'a small/young cow' (calf). So, for the word *ing'ombe*, there is nothing like *inyana ng'ombe* in Shinyiha. This generally suggests that forming diminution by using *-ana* is not very productive in Shinyiha. For that reason, this paper dwells on the use of noun class prefixes in forming diminution and discusses it at length because that is a dominant strategy.

Among the questions raised in the morphosyntactic variations among Bantu language is whether diminutive meaning is expressed through noun classes. For Shinyiha, the answer is affirmative. Noun classes are used in expressing diminution and augmentation. For diminution, there are two sets of noun classes which are used in Shinyiha. The classes include 7/8 and 12/13. The details follow below.

Diminution Involving Class 7/8

Changing a noun class prefix from other noun classes and using a class 7/8 prefix has two senses. It first expresses the concept of 'smallness'. Second, it has the sense of pejorative to mean 'bad' or 'lower in status.'

From Classes 1 and 2 Nouns to Diminutives

Like in other Bantu languages, in Shinyiha, class 1 nouns refer to human beings (see Asheli, 2013: 26). The prefixes for classes 1 and 2 in Shinyiha are *mu-* and *bha-* respectively. When those nouns adopt *shi-* and *vi-* respectively, they will be considered to be expressing diminution. The following exemplify.

(1) From Classes 1/2

<i>u-mu-ganga</i>	a doctor	<i>i-shi-ganga</i>	a small bad doctor or a doctor of lower status
Aug-1-doctor		Aug-7-doctor	
<i>u-mu-lindu</i>	a girl	<i>i-shi-lindu</i>	a small bad/ugly girl or a girl of lower status.
Aug-1-girl		Aug-7-girl	
<i>u-mu-lumendo</i>	a boy	<i>i-shi-lumendo</i>	a small bad/dirty boy or a boy of lower status.
Aug-1-boy		Aug-7-boy	
<i>u-sokulu</i>	grandfather	<i>i-shi-sokulu</i>	a small bad grandfather

Aug-grandfather		Aug-7-grandfather	or a grandfather of lower status.
<i>u-Joni</i>	John	<i>i-shi-Joni</i>	The small bad John or John of lower status.
Aug-John		Aug-7-John	
<i>u-mayi</i>	mother	<i>i-shi-mayi</i>	a small, emaciated bad lower status mother
Aug-mother		Aug-7-mother	
<i>a-bha-ntu</i>	persons	<i>i-vi-ntu</i>	little bad people or people of lower status or things
Aug-2-person		Aug-8-person	

In the examples above, diminutives are formed involving shift in noun classes 1/ 2 to noun classes 7/8. The resulting nouns in classes 7/8 have the sense of small/little or lower status. In other words, they have small size and pejorative senses. This means that if nouns pertaining to human beings are to be talked about normally (without emotional sense), they are to be put in noun classes 1 /2 where they are considered normal and respectful. Classes 1 /2, therefore are default noun classes for human beings.

It is important to note that there are nouns that may have two interpretations. For example, the noun *ishintu* may be interpreted as a thing or a small person depending on context. When it refers to a person, it has pejorative sense. By contrast, when it refers to a thing, it does not have pejorative sense. This use of class 7/8 for diminution is attested in Kiswahili as reported by Frankl (1994) who gives examples such *kitoto* ‘a small child’ and *kijitoto* ‘a small helpless child’. Based on the data given, in Shinyiha and Kiswahili two processes seem to operate. Diminution is achieved by changing default noun classes and using 7/8 noun class prefixes. Then the resulting nouns are given pejorative sense.

From other Noun Classes to Class 7/8 Diminutives

Apart from shifting nouns from classes 1/2 into classes 7/8 to form diminutives, shift of other noun classes into classes 7/8 has the same effect i.e. it brings about diminution and pejoration. However, in Shinyiha, classes 3, 5, 6, 9 and 10 are the ones that allow their nouns to change to 7/8. The following examples illustrate.

(2) From other Noun Classes

<i>u-mu-lyango</i>	‘a door’	<i>i-shi-lyango</i>	‘a small bad door or a door of lower status.’
Aug-3-door		Aug-7-door	
<i>u-mu-laza</i>	‘the chief’s farm’	<i>i-shi-laza</i>	‘a small bad chief’s farm.’
Aug-3-chief’s farm		Aug-7-chief’s farm	
<i>i-lyi-nso</i>	‘an eye’	<i>i-shi-nso</i>	‘a small bad eye’
Aug-5-eye		Aug-7-eye	
<i>i-n-kuku</i>	‘a hen’	<i>i-shi-kuku</i>	‘a small bad hen’
Aug-9-hen		Aug-7-hen	
<i>i-m-buzi</i>	‘goats’	<i>i-vi-bhuzi</i>	‘small bad goats’
Aug-10-goat		Aug-8-goat	
<i>i-n-yobhe</i>	‘arms’	<i>i-vi-yobhe</i>	‘small bad arms’
Aug-10-arm		Aug-8-arm	

As it can be seen in (1) and (2), in Shinyiha, nouns that do not prototypically belong to classes 7/8 will be placed in those classes when the speaker wants to refer to particular things as small/little or lower in status. As just pointed out, this matches with the findings by Frankl (1994) who talks about diminution in Kiswahili involving classes 7/8. Interestingly, in Shinyiha, nouns which belong to classes 7/8 as their original classes do not have the sense of little or lower in status. For example, the words *ishitengo/ivitengo* ‘chair/chairs’ are normal. They have no additional semantic interpretation. We can then argue that classes 7/8 diminutives formed from nouns normally belonging to other classes are derivational. They mostly have the sense of small/little or lower status.

It may also be argued that class 7/8 has two sub-classes. The first class is made of nouns that refer to things/instruments. The second sub-class has the sense of little/small or lower status. The former would include nouns like those in the following examples.

(3) Normal Class 7/8 Nouns

<i>i-shi-nama</i>	<i>i-vi-nama</i>	‘leg(s)’
Aug-7-leg	Aug-8-leg	
<i>i-shi-anga</i>	<i>i-vw-anga</i>	‘granary(ies)’

Aug-7-granary	Aug-8-granary	
<i>i-shi-hanu</i>	<i>i-vi-hanu</i>	‘wild animal(s)’
Aug-7-wild animal	Aug-8-wild animal	
<i>i-shi-tuundu</i>	<i>i-vi-tuundu</i>	‘basket(s)’
Aug-7-basket	Aug-8-basket	
<i>i-shi-fubha</i>	<i>i-vi-fubha</i>	‘chest(s)’
Aug-7-chest	Aug-8-chest	
<i>i-shi-tute</i>	<i>i-vi-tute</i>	‘mashed potato meal(s)’
Aug-7-mashed potato meal	Aug-8-mashed potato meal	

Examples in (3) above show that prototypical class 7/8 nouns do not have the sense of small/little or lower status. For example, *ishinama* which simply refers to a normal leg is conceived normal i.e. it is neither small nor big. It is logical, then to argue that prototypical members in classes 7/8 have normal meaning. They are neither diminutives nor pejoratives. It is nouns derived from other classes that bring about diminution and pejorative sense.

Diminution Involving Class 12/13

Apart from classes 7/8, Shinyiha forms diminution using classes 12/13. Apart from expressing the concept of ‘smallness’, diminutives formed using classes 12/13 have appreciative role or ameliorative meaning. They sometimes refer to the young of something. For example, the word *ahakunda* which means a small pigeon, may mean a fully-grown pigeon which is perceived to be small in size or simply a young pigeon. Generally, the words that are formed as a result of replacing prefixes of other noun classes with prefixes of class 12/13 mean ‘small’ or ‘good...’ or ‘small and good.’ Examples in (4) illustrate.

(4) Diminution Involving Class 12/13

<i>u-mu-ana</i>	‘a child’	<i>a-ha-ana</i>	‘a small good child’
Aug-1-child		Aug-12-child	
<i>a-bha-ntu</i>	‘persons’	<i>u-tu-ntu</i>	‘small good persons’
Aug-2-person		Aug-13-person	

<i>i-lyi-no</i>	‘a tooth’	<i>a-h(a)i-no</i>	‘a small good tooth’
Aug-5-tooth		Aug-12-tooth	
<i>a-ma-gamba</i>	‘mountains’	<i>u-tu-gamba</i>	‘small good mountains (hills)’
Aug-6-mountain		Aug-13-mountain	
<i>i-shi-tundu</i>	‘a basket’	<i>a-ha-tundu</i>	‘a small good basket’
Aug-7-basket		Aug-12-basket	
<i>i-vi-tundu</i>	‘baskets’	<i>u-tu-tundu</i>	‘small good baskets’
Aug-8-basket		Aug-13-basket	
<i>i-m-buzi</i>	‘a goat’	<i>a-ha-bhuzi</i>	‘a small good goat (kid)’
Aug-9-goat		Aug-12-goat	

Examples in (4) provide a number of nouns from different classes that become diminutives when they take affixes from classes 12/13. However, there are no class 4 nouns forming diminutives using classes 12/13 in Shinyiha. This is the case because nouns in class 4 are plural forms of augmentatives of class 3 nouns. In this language, class 3 nouns that are not augmentatives form their plurals with class 6. For that reason, there are no prototypical nouns that belong to noun class 4 in Shinyiha.

As pointed out earlier, in Shinyiha, most of the diminutives formed in classes 7/8 have pejorative sense. They mostly mean ‘small and ugly.’ In terms of size, it is difficult to judge which diminutive nouns refer to smaller things than others between those in 7/8 and the ones in 12/13. The concept of size is more psychological and cannot be objectively measured. So, we can then argue that diminutives formed using classes 7/8 differ from those formed using class 12/13 just because the former have negative/pejorative sense while the latter have ameliorative sense.

Like Sisumbwa, as shown by Kahigi (2005), Shinyiha has class 13 nouns which refer to words which mean ‘little amount’. Gibson et al (2018) refer to that sense of diminutives as individuation. The following examples illustrate what the case is in Shinyiha.

(5) Individuation in Class 13

<i>u-tu-inzi</i>	‘small amount of water’	Aug-13-water
<i>u-tu-pele</i>	‘a little amount of local beer’	Aug-13-beer

<i>u-tu-futa</i>	‘a little amount of oil’	Aug-13-oil
<i>u-tu-zibha</i>	‘a little amount of milk’	Aug-13-milk

Diminutives and Agreement

As far as agreement is concerned, diminutive nouns have the same agreement patterns as those of non-diminutive nouns in classes 7/8 and 12/13. The examples in (6) illustrate.

(6) Agreement patterns for diminutives

<i>I-shi-ana</i>	<i>i-shi-fupi</i>	<i>shi-ku-lil-a</i>																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																					</
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Augmentation in Shinyiha

In Shinyiha, augmentation, like diminution, involves change of noun classes. Classes 3/4 and 5/6 are the ones used to form augmentatives. The details are provided below.

Augmentation Involving Classes 3/4

Normally, nouns from various classes will adopt class 3/4 prefixes if the speaker wants to express the sense of big and bad. Examples in (7) show how augmentatives are made from different noun classes.

(7) Augmentation Involving Classes 3/4

<i>a-bha-jaha</i>	‘youth’	<i>i-mi-jaha</i>	‘big bad youths’
Aug-2-young		Aug-4-witch	
<i>i-lyi-inso</i>	‘eye’	<i>u-mu-inso</i>	‘a big bad eye’
Aug-5-eye		Aug-3-eye	
<i>i-shi-nama</i>	‘a leg’	<i>u-mu-nama</i>	‘a big bad leg’

Aug-7-leg		Aug-3-leg	
<i>i-vi-nama</i>	‘legs’	<i>i-mi-nama</i>	‘big bad legs’
Aug-8-leg		Aug-4-leg	
<i>i-vi-tundu</i>	‘baskets’	<i>i-mi-tundu</i>	‘big bad baskets’
Aug-8-basket		Aug-4-basket	
<i>i-n-g’ombe</i>	‘a cow’	<i>u-mu-gombe</i>	‘a big bad cow’
Aug-9-cow		Aug-3-cow	
<i>i-n-go’mbe</i>	‘cows’	<i>i-mi-gobe</i>	‘big bad cows’
Aug-10-cow		Aug-4-house	
<i>u-lu-ng’ongwa</i>	‘hump	<i>u-mu-</i>	‘a big hump of a
Aug-11-hump	of a cow’	<i>ng’ongwa</i>	cow’
		Aug-3-hump	

Examples in (7) show that nouns from different classes are changed to noun classes 3/4 to make augmentatives. As already shown, the augmentatives formed by classes 3/4 have the sense of ‘big and bad.’ It is important to note that using noun classes 3/4 to form augmentatives manifests something different from what Katamba (2003) says in his semantic account of noun classes. In Katamba’s account, classes 3/4 are not among noun classes for augmentatives. Interestingly, however, the use of the same noun classes for augmentation is partly attested in Ndali as shown by Kishindo (1998) who mentions classes 3/4, among others, as the realm of augmentation and pejoration.

Augmentation Involving Class 5/6

Classes 5/6 are commonly known for forming augmentatives in Bantu languages. In support of that, Katamba (2003) mentions classes 5/6 as one of the noun classes where augmentatives are formed. In Shinyiha, augmentatives formed using classes 5/6 have the sense of ‘big.’ Examples in (7) show how various noun classes are made to be augmentatives by adopting classes 5/6.

(8) Augmentation Involving Class 5/6

<i>u-mu-lindu</i>	‘a girl’	<i>i-lindu</i>	‘a big bad girl’
Aug-1- girl		Aug-girl	
<i>a-bha-ana</i>	‘children’	<i>a-ma-ana</i>	‘big bad children’

Aug-2-child		Aug-6-child	
<i>a-bha-lindu</i>	‘girls’	<i>a-ma-lindu</i>	‘big bad girls’
Aug-2-girl		Aug-6-child	
<i>u-mu-gunda</i>	‘farm’	<i>i-gunda</i>	‘a big bad farm’
Aug-3-farm		Aug-farm	
<i>i-shi-nama</i>	‘a leg’	<i>i-nama</i>	‘a big bad leg’
Aug-7-leg		Aug-leg	
<i>i-shi-hanu</i>	‘a wild animal’	<i>i-hanu</i>	‘a big bad wild animal’
Aug-7-wild animal		Aug-wild animal	
<i>i-vi-hanu</i>	‘wild animals’	<i>a-ma-hanu</i>	‘big bad wild animals’
Aug-8-wild animal		Aug-6-wild animal	
<i>i-n-yumba</i>	‘a house’	<i>i-yumba</i>	‘a big bad house’
Aug-9-house		Aug-house	
<i>i-m-buzi</i>	‘a goat’	<i>i-bhuzi</i>	‘a big bad goat’
Aug-9-goat		Aug-goat	
<i>i-n-yumba</i>	‘houses’	<i>a-ma-yumba</i>	‘big bad houses’
Aug-10-house		Aug-6-house	

In the examples provided in (8), we see nouns of different classes making augmentatives by being assigned to classes 5/6. We have also seen that nouns which are in augmentative form have the sense of big size and some sense of pejoration. What is a bit complicated in Shinyiha is the differences in meaning between augmentatives formed by classes 3/4 and those formed by classes 5/6.

The native speakers consulted suggested that both sets of noun classes (i.e. 3/4 and 5/6) are qualified for forming augmentatives. When asked to distinguish the meaning of *imintu* (class 4) and *amantu* (class 5), for example, despite asserting both to be correct, they were not quite sure what the difference is. Further study is required to establish what exactly the differences in meaning between augmentatives belonging to different classes are. For now two predictions can be made. First, there is a possibility that there is an on-going language change in which case, one set of noun classes will cease to form augmentatives while the other will continue to do

so. Another possibility is that there are two Shinyiha varieties where one variety uses one set of noun classes for forming augmentatives while the other uses another set of noun classes.

It is interesting to note that nouns prototypically belonging to classes 3/4 and 5/6 are not augmentatives. When one wishes to change nouns in such classes into augmentatives, one will be required to assign them to a different class. For example, in (8), *umugunda* is prototypically a noun belonging to class 3. However, it has to be assigned to class 5/6 to make it an augmentative, in which case it becomes *igunda* (a big bad farm), which is class 5. It is important to note here that some class 5 nouns have a covert prefix and others have a *li* prefix. Those with an overt prefix include such words as *ilyino* ‘a tooth’ and *ilyinso* ‘an eye’. Nouns without an overt prefix are identified as class 5/6 nouns by observing their subject-verb agreement pattern. So, one could say *igunda limezile amangagu* to mean ‘a big farm has had maize sprouted in.’ Here *li-* is a noun class 5 prefix. Interestingly, class 6 nouns that are plural forms of class 3 are not considered to be augmentatives. For example, the plural of *umugunda* ‘farm’ (class 3) is *amagunda* ‘farms’ (class 6). In this case, the latter is not augmentative. If we are to make *amagunda* an augmentative, we will use class 4 i.e. *imigunda* ‘big bad farms.’

In summary, classes 3/4 and 5/6 nouns exchange positions when they express augmentative sense. That means classes 3/4 and 5/6 will pick prefixes from each other in order to be augmented.

Augmentatives and Agreement

The noun class prefixes for augmentatives are manifested in agreement. They are marked in adjectives that follow nouns which are augmented. Examples in (9) illustrate this.

(9) Augmentatives and Agreement

<i>u-mu-nama</i>	<i>u-mu-tali</i>	<i>u-la</i>	<i>wu-ku-bhabh-a</i>	‘That big long bad leg is aching’
Aug-3-leg	Aug-3-long	Aug-that	SM-Pres-ache FV	
<i>i-mi-twe</i>	<i>i-mi-piti</i>	<i>yi-la</i>	<i>yi-ku-bhabh-a</i>	‘Those big bad heads are aching’
Aug-4-head	Aug-4-big	Aug-that	SM-Pres ache-FV	
<i>i-li-ntu</i>	<i>i-gosi</i>	<i>li-ku-lim-a</i>		‘The big bad old man is cultivating’
Aug-5-person	Aug-old	SM-Pres-cultivate-FV		

<i>a-ma-ntu</i>	<i>a-ma-tali</i>	<i>ga-ku-shimbil-a</i>	'The tall big bad
Aug-6-person	Aug-6-tall	SM-Pres-run-FV	people are
			running'

The examples just seen show that augmentatives follow the normal agreement patterns like those followed by nouns that are not augmentatives.

The Semantic Basis of Diminution and Augmentation

When discussing and describing diminutives and augmentatives, I have hinted on what they mean. I have shown that diminutives generally mean 'smallness in size'. They may also be ameliorative or pejorative in meaning. It is the noun classes to which different diminutives belong that dictate what they will mean. Those involving classes 7/8 have pejorative meaning while those involving classes 12/13 have ameliorative meaning. I have as well shown that augmentatives express the sense of big size. They also connote 'bad' or 'ugly'. Generally, diminutives and augmentatives have been shown to be meaningful.

An important question that needs to be answered here is: Why should one use diminutives and augmentatives in communication? This question can be answered by considering what Croft and Cruse (2004) call construal operations. The authors argue that whenever people communicate, they take certain perspectives. They want to be construed in a certain manner. Croft & Cruse (2004: 40) use examples of choices which people make when communicating. They say, for example, one can use *dad*, *my dad* or *father* for different construals. Croft & Cruse (ibid) go on to say that one can also use *spend time* or *waste time* for yet different construals. Language users make such choices because they want to be understood in a certain manner. In other words, communicators have their communicative agenda which make them frame their messages the way they do.

It can then be argued that communicators have a variety of choices to make when using language. Diminution and augmentation are among the construal operations. Instead of using diminution, Shinyiha speakers can use the adjective that means 'small'. For example, one can say *inkuku inyinsi* 'a small hen.' If they opt for diminutives, they will either use *ahakuku* or *ishikuku* depending on how they want to be understood. The language users can also use adjectives that mean 'big' instead of augmentatives. It is essentially

the communicative agenda that determines the linguistic choices one will make.

Based on construal operations, I wish to argue that the semantic basis for diminution and augmentation is construal forces. When they want to sound pejorative and ameliorative, language users go for appropriate diminutives. By contrast, when they want to express bigness of size and ugliness, Shinyiha speakers opt for augmentatives. If they want to sound normal, Shinyiha speakers will use default noun classes for particular nouns.

Conclusion

This paper has shown that augmentation and diminution in Shinyiha involve a shift of a noun from one noun class to another. The paper has also shown that diminution and augmentation in Shinyiha are expressed by noun class prefixes as is the case in other Bantu languages. The two processes essentially involve change in meaning of the previous nouns. The meanings of diminution include expressing smallness in size with either pejorative or appreciative sense depending on the noun classes involved. On the other hand, the paper has demonstrated that augmentation has the sense of big size and ugly. This generally shows that in Shinyiha nouns can be moved to a different class to achieve the intention of the speaker. So augmentatives and diminutives are aspects of construal operations because they are used by speakers to achieve their communicative agenda. The two processes act as psychological tools by which the communicator construes meaning in a particular perspective. The forms and roles of the two processes match with various studies done earlier on the semantics of noun classes in Bantu languages. Therefore, Shinyiha has some points of similarities with other Bantu languages as well as points of departure. The uniqueness observed in Shinyiha with regards to the two linguistic processes demonstrates that Shinyiha is a language in its own right. What is interesting for Shinyiha is the fact that it has two sets of each of the two processes. For diminution, noun classes 7/8 and 12/13 are responsible. By contrast, augmentation is achieved by the classes 3/4 and 5/6. There are two sets of noun classes for each process because each noun class achieves a particular communicative meaning different from the other. I recommend further study on augmentation especially on the difference in meaning between augmentatives involving classes 3/4 and those involving classes 5/6.

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