Morphological and Semantic Aspects of the Lexicon in Luzinza: *Preliminary Observations.*

Y.I. Rubanza

Department of Kiswahili, University of Dar es Salaam

Abstract

These are preliminary views on nouns in Luzinza. Nouns in Luzinza take the typical prefixes; they may be categorized into *underived* and *derived* nouns. We also have reduplications and compounds, as is characteristic of many Bantu languages. We have so far observed that the noun classes that we have looked at that show more or less complete semantic cohesion are classes 1/2, infinitives and locatives.

1.0 Introduction

The paper examines the methods Luzinza speakers use to produce words in their language. The paper is the product of a data collection research project which was conducted in Kagera region in Muleba district in July and August 2002. The research was conducted in the islands of Bumbire, Masinga, Ikuza, Musalala and Chakazimbwe.

2.0 Morphological Aspects of the Luzinza Noun

All Luzinza nouns fall under noun classes which determine the morphology of almost all nominal elements. We shall first show various noun classes in Luzinza and later deal with the non-derived and derived nouns.

2.1 Concord System

In Luzinza, as is the case for most Bantu languages, nouns are divided into classes, which are distinguished by prefixes that are affixed to the noun stem. A class of nominal is made up of words that have similar prefixes. Singular and plural, (which in turn form part of a set of concord elements operating a distinct pattern of agreement) as shown in table 1.

Table 1. The Noun Class System of Luzinza

Class	Pre	Prefix	Example	Gloss	Description
1	o	mu~mw	Kwata	man, male	Singular of 2
2	a	ba	Kwata	men, males	plural of 1
3	o	mu	Kubi	vegetable	Singular of 4
4	e	mi	Kubi	vegetables	plural of 3
5	-	i	Lizi	tear	Singular of 6
6	a	ma	Izi	tears	plural of 5
7	e	chi	Lagilo	order	Singular of 8
8	e	bi	Lagilo	orders	plural of 7
9	e	n	Fi	fish	Singular of 10
10	e	n	Fi	fish	plural of 9 & 11
11	o	lu	Ba	bundle of grass,	Singular of 10
12	e	n (n~m~ny)	Ba	bundle of grass	plural of 11 & 9
13	a	ka	Te	"small/little" cows	diminutive, singular of 13/14
14	o	tu	Te	"small/little" cows	diminutive, plural (2) of 12
15	o	bu	Te	"small/little" cows	diminutive, plural (2) of 12
16	o	ku~kwo	Otulo	to sleep	infinitive, other miscellaneous objects
17	a	ma	Guru	legs	plural of 15 body parts
18			Aha	here	Locative - specific place
19			Aho	there	Locative - general place
20	o	mu	Kanisa	inside church	Locative – inside

The table indicates that in Luzinza, there are eighteen noun classes. Most of these may be grouped into singular-plural pairs, while a few may be neutral, i.e. neither singular nor plural. All of these nouns may broadly be distinguished as derived or underived, which we describe below.

2.2 Derived Nouns

Derived nouns are in various forms. There are those that are derived by affixing the pre-prefix and one or more prefixes which constitute a new meaning from the meaning of the noun with one prefix. Other types are derived nouns whose base is verbal. These are formed by nominalization of their stems by certain prefixes. Each type will be considered in turn.

2.2.1   Nouns with pre-prefixes

These nouns are formed by taking already made nouns as input and affixing a different prefix. Example of such nouns are in order here:

1. (a)   o- mu-fwelafwela
   Pp- 1- fool   "a fool"

   (b)   a- ba- fwelafwela
         Pp- 2- fool   "a group of fools"

   (c)   a- ka- fwelafwela
         Pp- 12- fool   "a little/small fool"

   (d)   o- tu- fwelafwela
         Pp- 13- fool   "a group of little/small fools"

In these examples Pp refers to the pre-prefix, the number is reference to the noun class and the stem follows their after.

A noun can be turned into a locative by simply affixing locative noun class to other basic noun classes such as:

2. (a)   o – ku – guru   a leg

   (b)   o – ha – ku – guru   at the leg

3. (a)   o – mu – mu – fumu   at a place of a healer
         Pp – 18   1

   (b)   o – mu – ba – fumu   at a place of/healers
         Pp – 18 - 2   healer

2.3 Deverbal nouns

Deverbal nouns consist of a class of nominalized verbs. They differ from root nouns and nouns derived from other nouns in that they are formed by prefixing and suffixing simultaneously to verbal stems. The nominal derivation suffix which takes the place of the final affix in the relevant verbal stem may probably include the vowels [i] and [o] as the examples below show:

4. a)   o – mu – lim – i   (lima)   "a farmer"
         Pp 1   farm Nzer   farm   "farmers"

         1 – ba – lim – i

Pp 2 farm nzer

b)   o – mu – lim – o   "a job"
pp 3   farm nzer

c – mi - lim - o
pp   4   farm - nzer   "jobs"

c)   o - ku - lima - (lima)   "farming/to farm"
pp - 15 - farm - fu

2.3.1   Deverbal noun extensions

Deverbal nouns do accommodate suffixal extensions just as verbs do. We list a few examples of suffixal extensions that can be applied on deverbal noun stems in (5):

5.   a)   ku - ikilij - angan - a   "to agree"
            15 - agree - rcp   - fv

     b)   ku - esheme - z -a (from *shemela*)   "cause to look nice"
            15 - look nice - caus - fv   "look nice"

     c)   ku - ongeja - ho   "to add to"
            15 - add   - loc

     d)   ku - ikilija - kwo   "to quite agree"
            15 - agreed - manner

     e)   ku - ibu - lula   (ibika)   bale   out water
            15 - bale - rev   (bale in water)

2.4 Underived nouns

Underived nouns (that is roots) are made up with the affixation of the noun class to stem (or stem only). A part from the noun class prefix, these nouns are nor further decomposable into simpler components. Examples of root nouns in Luzinza are provided in (6).

6.   a)   o - mu - nwa   " a mouth"
            N - 3   - mouth

            E - mi - nwa
            Pp - 4 - mouth   "mouths"

     b)   kanyawakani "rabbit"

c)   kasoke   "crowd"

d)   endizi   "cry baby"

2.5 Compound nouns

Underived and derived nouns described above have a number of distributional properties in Luzinza.   They form phrases either by themselves or in combination with nominal modifiers. Examples are in order here:

7. a)   mahe - muto →mahento   "aunt, maternal"
         mother young

    b)   ku - egambilisilija   endimi   "bable"
         15 - speak   tongue

    c)   mu - kuru   wanze   "my blood brother"
         1 - old   mine

    d)   mi - handa -   itana   "branch off (for a road)"
         4 - road/path   branch

Other compound nouns includes reduplication as exemplified below:

8. a)   abarugaruga   "army/soldiers"
    b)   orugongogongo   "backbone"
    c)   okuzimazima   "flicker (i.e. of distant fire)"
    d)   inyikanyika   "Spring"

As shown in the above examples the repeated part of the stem serves some derivational purposes such as expressing various phases of intensiveness or modify the force of the word etc.

3.0 The Semantic Criteria in Luzinza Noun Classification

In Luzinza the grouping of referential entities into noun classes has clear semantic criteria for some of the classes, while for many others the semantics are not clear cut.

Classes 1 and 2 (omu-/aba-)

All nouns belonging to class1 are human ones such as *mahe* "mother" *omukwata* "man/husband", *omukaji* "woman/wife" *omwana* "child" etc. The class also includes kinship terms such as *mukuruwanze* "blood brother", *mukaaka* "grandmother" *omuguku* "grandfather, etc.   Professional terms

such as *omwegesa* "teacher", *omuchunguzi* "savior", *omufumu* "healer", *omugabi* "priest". Class 2 contains the plural forms of class 1.

Class 3 and 4 (omu-/emi-)
Class 3 and its correlated plural class 4 includes names for parts of the body, e.g. *omukono* "arm", *omunwa* "mouth" *omugongo* "back (of body)"; names of plants, especially trees e.g. *omusalaazi* "a tree bearing wilderness fruits" and artifacts nature such as *omucheka* "mat" *omusenyi* "sand" etc.

Class 5 and 6 (i-/ama-)
Class 5 and 6 singular and plural respectively, includes names of fruits, such as *inyembe* "mango", *ipapai* "pawpaw"; places like *iliisizo* "pasture, grazing ground", abstract entities like *isima* "respect", *isala* "knowledge" and others which includes *ichumu*, "spear, *isazu*, "animal fat" and *isami* "lake flies" etc.

Class 7 and 8 (echi-/ebi-)
Nouns of class 7 and 8 are of miscellaneous significance and are generally impersonal. They include names of things such as echinyaabula "grave/monument", echinyumanyuma a "shadow", and *echiseke* "pipe". Other words include places like *echisenge* "cooking room in which women alone are allowed to enter"; and a general name for an animal which is *echigunju*.

Class 9 and 10 (eN-/-)
Class 9 and 10 do not carry a prefix which is governed by the phonology and Luzinza a point beyond this paper. The forms however are n-, m-, and N. Most of the names which falls under these classes are impersonal such as names of insects such as *embaala* "tsetsefly", *enchunchu* "red ants" and *enda* "lice". These classes also consist of words borrowed from other languages such as *endala* "sandles" *emotoka* "car/bus" (borrowed from Swahili) etc.

Classes 11/10. (olu-/eN-).
The nouns of classes 11 consist of names of impersonal objects such as *oluganda*, "clan, family, kinship", *olugano*, "story", *oluhu* "skin" and parts of the body such as *oluhala*, "boldhead" olulimi, "tongue" *olukumu* "finger" etc. the plural of class

Classes 12/13-14 (aka/acha?/out/obu)
Classes 12 and 13/14 are the diminutive singular and plural respectively, for example, *akakala* "wild small cat", *otukala* "wild small cats" and *obukala* "wild small cats". These are also classes that denote endearment. Thus

akamotoka may also refer to a car that is seen to be endearing. As it was shown from table 1, there are two types of the plural form of class 12, shown as otu- and obu- respectively. One of the interviewees insisted that class 14 mainly denote endearment.

Classes 15/6 (oku-/ama-)
Class 15 consists of infinitive nouns and gerunds such as *okukulaatila* "to follow" or "following" as well as names for various body parts such as *okuguru* "leg" *okutwi* "ear". The body parts in this class derive plural from class 6, so *amaguru* "legs" *amatwi* "ears" are the resulting plurals for the mentioned examples.

Classes 16, 17 and 18 (-ha/-ho/ -mu-)
Classes 16 and 17 both refer to location of things with class 16 making reference of the specific place, class 17 the general place and class 18 which indicates inside (something). The specificity of a place is relativized to the parameters set in a given conversation.

Thus far it has been shown that Luzinza, like other Bantu languages, has an elaborate system of noun classification. There are at least 18 noun classes in the language. As has also been shown above, the glosses show that some classes have a whole range of semantic properties associated with them. (For more examples, refer to Mathews (2000) and Rubanza (2008)). Thus we may conclude that in Luzinza, like in other Bantu languages, nouns are classified in groups not based on the semantic criteria but rather on their concordial properties.

4.0 Conclusion
In this paper, we have seen that all Luzinza nouns are grouped into noun classes. The particular class to which a noun belongs is not totally determined by semantic criteria for most classes with the exception of the human classes 1 and 2, class 15 (an infinitive class), and the locative classes 16 - 18. What is evident is that for most classes morphological criteria work well as the basis for grouping, although it is not always the case that a noun class is identified simply by the appearance of its prefix. They are cases where a certain prefix may mark more than one noun class, such as *mu-* (class 1 and 3).

References

Mathews, T.G. (ed) 2000 *Ekamusi ye Chizinza*. SIL International Uganda – Tanzania Branch. Dodoma. Tanzania.

Rubanza, Y.I. 2008 *Zinza-English-Swahili* and *English-Zinza-Swahili Lexicon*. LOT Publications: Lexicon series No. 8.