



BRIEF LINGUISTIC OVERVIEW OF CINDALI

PRESENTATION MADE AT THE LINGUISTICS IN MALAWI EXPERIENCE(LIME)

BY DR. ATIKONDA AKUZIKE MTENJE-MKOCHI AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI (CENTRE FOR LANGUAGE STUDIES)

INTRODUCTION

- Brief sociolinguistic overview
- Phonetics and Phonology
- Morpho-syntax

WORKS ON CINDALI

- Botne, R. (2008). Grammatical Sketch of Chindali: Malawian Variety. Darby: Diane.
- Botne, R. and Schaffer, L. (2008). A Chindali and English Dictionary with an Index to ProtoBantu Roots: The Chindali Language of Malawi. Vol I. Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society.
- Mtenje, A.D., (2006a). On recent trends in Phonology and Vowel Sequences in Bantu. Mtenje, A.D. (2006b). Tone in Cindali., Lingua 116(10): 1495-1506.
- Mtenje, A.A. (2016) A comparative analysis of the phonology and morphosyntax in Cisukwa, Cindali and Cilambya

BRIEF SOCIOLINGUISTIC OVERVIEW

- **Cindali (M301)**
- An under described minority language spoken by an estimated 70,000 people in Malawi.
- Spoken in the northern region of the country, specifically in Chitipa District in the Misuku Hills, parts of Traditional Authority Kameme and parts of the Karonga District.
- Also said to be spoken in the northern part of the Karonga District and in parts of southern Tanzania, namely in the Ileje District and some in Rungwe and Mbozi Districts.
- In their 2006 language mapping report, the Centre for Language Studies of Malawi groups Cisukwa, Cindali and Cilambya together as one language and Mtenje (2016) also provides phonological and morpho-syntactic evidence which suggests that these varieties constitute a dialect continuum.

PHONETICS AND PHONOLOGY (VOWELS)

- Has five short vowels with their long counterparts.
- Vowels (short)
- i u
- e o
- a

VOWELS

Long vowels

ii

uu

ee

oo

aa

- -tima 'become wet' -tiima 'graze, cattle'
- -kema 'crack' -keema 'grunt'
- -kaba – 'earn' - kaaba 'be late'
- -kola – 'touch, hold' -koola 'cough'
- -futa – shape dough - fuuta 'breathe'
- into a ball
- Data from Botne (2008)

VOWELS

- Just like other Bantu languages, Cindali does not have diphthongs or nasal vowels in its sound inventories.

CONSONANTS

	bilabials	Labio-dentals	alveolars	Alveo-palatals	Palatals	Velars	Labio-velars	glottals
stops	p			t		k		
nasals	m			n		ŋ		
fricatives	β	f	s	ʃ		χ		h
affricates					tʃ			
affricates								
approximate						j		w
lateral			l					

PHONETICS AND PHONOLOGY (CONSONANTS)

- Cindali has 17 consonants.
- It does not have voiced counterparts of some consonants (for instance the stops and fricatives)

CONSONANTS

- It also has some palatalized and labialized sequences
- $p^j, p^w, \beta^w, t^j, t^w, k^j, k^w, l^j, f^j, v^j, v^w$

SYLLABLE STRUCTURE

- Basic syllable structure is the CV
- eg. *u.mú.li.ndu* ‘girl’
- *u.ma.ma* ‘mother’
- It dispreffers hiatus contexts and will apply hiatus resolution strategies such as glide formation, glide insertion, deletion

SEGMENTAL PROCESSES

- **Homorganic nasal assimilation:** a nasal copies the place of articulation features of a following consonant and thus becomes homorganic with that consonant.
 - í-n-dondwa “star”
 - í-m-besu “cockroach”
 - i-ŋ-guku “chicken”
- **Consonant hardening (fortition):** the hardening process involves the change of /l/ and /β/ to [d] and [b] respectively when they occur after nasals.
 - Class 11 English gloss
 - u-lú-limi ‘tongue’
 - u-lú-βwele ‘fly’
 - Class 10 English gloss
 - í-n-dimi ‘tongues’
 - i-m-bweele ‘flies’

SEGMENTAL PROCESSES

- **Post nasal stop voicing** – a stop becomes voiced when it is followed by a nasal)
- **Nasal consonant deletion** before fricatives – a nasal is deleted when it is followed by a fricative.

Class 11	English gloss
u-lu-késo	AUG-11-ladle
Class 10	English gloss
i-ŋ-géso	'ladle'

- **Nasal consonant deletion** before fricatives – a nasal is deleted when it is followed by a fricative.

• PR	UR	English gloss
• ii-sóofu	/i-N-sófu/	‘elephant’
• lí-fula	/í-N-fula/	‘rain’

TONE

- Cindali has register (level) tones, i.e. high (H) and low (L) tones and they also exhibit contour tones in the form of rising and falling tones.
- Contour tones are the result of a combination of high and low tones.
- Tone in Cindali can also contrast meaning as observed in examples.

• (1) SuNdLa	English gloss
• itʃípaanja	‘gully’
• itʃípaáŋga	‘denomination’
• imbóombo	‘work’
• Ímboómbo	‘navel’

TONE

- The realisation of a high tone is restricted and predictable in Cindali verbal morphology. A high tone is assigned either to the penultimate or antepenultimate mora/syllable, depending on a number of morphological and phonological factors. In the imperative the tone is on the penultimate *pulúka* 'fly'
- It has been noted that when the verbal tense has aspectual markers, these markers also influence the choice of where a high tone will be assigned viz., the penultimate or the antepenultimate position. Furthermore, there is only one high tone per verb.

NOUN CLASSES

- Canonical system with 19 noun classes
- Cindali has optional augments or pre-prefixes which manifest themselves in the shape of /i/, /u/ and /a/ depending on vowel harmony with the class prefix.
- The structure of the nouns in the three SuNdLa varieties therefore consists of a pre-prefix, a prefix and a noun stem.

NOUN CLASSES

Class	Augment	Prefix	Example
1	u	mu	umúliſa 'woman'
1a	u	Ø	umáma 'mother'
2	a	βa	aβaandu 'anthu'
2a	a	βo	aβómaji 'mothers'
3	u	mu	umúβili 'body'
4	i	mi	imítu 'heads'
5	i	li,Ø	llíβele 'breast;
6	a	Ma	amíſi 'water'

NOUN CLASSES

Class	Augment	Prefix	Examples
7	i	ci	icizjúuka 'ghost'
8	i	fi	ifífuwa 'chests'
9	i	N, Ø	iíŋgalamo 'lion'
10	i	N, Ø	iímbusi 'goat' iísouf 'fish'
11	u	lu	ulúlimi 'tongue'
12	a	ka	akáliindu 'small girl'
13	u	tu	

NOUN CLASSES

Class	Augment	Prefix	Examples
14	u	ßu	ußúfwe 'death'
15	u	ku	ukúlima 'to cultivate'
16		ku	kukaya 'at the village'
17		pa	palusoko 'on the river'
18		mu	mulusoko 'in the river'
21		ililosi	'horrific witch'

POSSESSIVES

- Possession can also be formed by attaching the agreement class prefix to a possessive stem or it can be derived through the associative construction.
- Cindali uses *-aŋgu* for 1st person singular; *-athu* for 1st person plural; *-ako* for 2nd person singular and plural; *-ake* for the 3rd person singular and *-awo* for 3rd person

ADJECTIVES

Semantic type	Example
Dimension	<i>-kulu</i> 'big'
Physical properties	<i>-piimba</i> 'shallow'
colour	<i>-swepu</i> 'white'
Human propensity	<i>-Kaβi</i> 'rich'
Age	<i>-náandi</i> 'young'
Value	<i>-pe</i> 'generous'

WORD ORDER

- Typical word order
- SVO
- umwanalume afuula shati
- The man has wonrn his hirt

VERB MORPHOLOGY

- Just like many Bantu languages, the Cindali is highly complex. It is composed of a root or radical with prefixes and suffixes attached to it.
- This root may be extended by suffixes, called Extensions or derivational suffixes. These Extensions change the meaning of the verb together with its valency. Root plus Extensions comprise the Verbal Base.

SUBJECT MARKING

- Subject marking
- Just like other Bantu languages, Cindali is a pro drop language (cf. Nurse and Phillipson 2003, Mchombo 2004, Mugari 2013). This means that the subject of a sentence may be left out. Information about the subject however, is carried by the subject marker.

SUBJECT MARKING

mw-analúme a-ful-a i-Ø-ʃati mu-mu-únda

I-man SMI-undress-FV AUG-9-shirt 18-3-garden.

The man has taken off his shirt in the garden.

SUBJECT MARKING

Person	Cindali
1sg	N-
2sf	u-
1pl	tu-

SUBJECT MARKING

Class	Subject agreement markers
1	a
2	βa
3	U-
4	i-
5	Li-
6	ma
7	Ci
8	Fi
9	i-

SUBJECT MARKING

Class	Subject agreement prefix
10	i-
11	lu-
12	ka-
13	ti-
14	ßu
15	ku-
16	pa-
17	ku
18	mu
21	Li-

OBJECT MARKING

- Cindali marks objects. The object marker is in preverbal position.
- **Ndamußéene mwana**
- I haven't seen the child

SELECTED EXTENSIONS

Extension	Example
Passive (iw, Botne notes –ibw-, -ikw-, -igw-, -w-	-loondiwa 'be needed', kuumbibwa 'be dug'
Causative (iʃ eʃ, y	ŋgumwiimbíʃa N-ku-mu-imb-iʃi-a SM sg-PROG-OM sing-CAUS-FV 'I am making him/her sing/dance'
Applicative (il, el)	ŋgumupíjila N- ku-mu-pij-il-a SM s-PROG-3sOM-cook-APPL-FV "I am cooking for him/her"
Reciprocal (an)	βakulóndana βa-ku-lónd-an-a 3pSM-PROG-want-REC-FV They want each other

REFERENCES

- Botne, R. (2008). Grammatical Sketch of Chindali: Malawian Variety. Darby: Diane.
- Botne, R. and Schaffer, L. (2008). A Chindali and English Dictionary with an Index to ProtoBantu Roots: The Chindali Language of Malawi. Vol 1. Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society.
- Mtenje, A.D., (2006a). On recent trends in Phonology and Vowel Sequences in Bantu. Mtenje, A.D. (2006b). Tone in Cindali., Lingua 116(10): 1495-1506.
- Mtenje, A.A. (2016) A comparative analysis of the phonology and morphosyntax in Cisukwa, Cindali and Cilambya
- Mtenje-Mkochi, A.A. (2018) 'Repair' strategies of vowel sequences in Cindali, South African Journal of African Languages, 38:3, 327-335, DOI: 10.1080/02572117.2018.1518045