The structure of Citumbuka

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Presentation outline

- Introduction
- Orthography
- Phonology
- Nominal morphology
- Morphosyntax: verbal derivation and argument structure
  - word order, subject marking, object marking
  - valency reducing
  - valency increasing

Introduction

- Citumbuka (N21) is Bantu language spoken in northern Malawi and north eastern Zambia. Kasungu, Nkhata bay and Nkhotakota (CLS 2006).
- About 2,000,000. speakers
- It is the lingua franca and semi-official language of northern Malawi
- Several varieties. They include Henga, 'Cingoni', phoka, 'Nyanja',
- Christian Missionaries, Vail (1971, 1972), Phiri (1981), Mphande (1989)
- No substantive grammar, monolingual dictionary

Orthography

- Varied orthographies in use.
- Standardised orthography aimed at standardising orthographic representation certain sounds:
  - **c**/ch – influence of Chichewa orthography
  - **ch**/tch- influence of Chichewa orthography
  - **sk**/sy- dialectal differences
  - **zg**/zɣ – dialectal differences
  - **ŵ**/b/ʊ/β- historical
  - **gh**/ɣ/ɣ -historical

Phonetics and Phonology

- Little is known about the Little is still known the phonetics and phonology of Citumbuka (Hamann, Miatto and Downing, L. (2019:).
- Vail (1972) classifies Tumbuka as a stress language.
- Tumbuka has predictable tone, which is not contrastive except in ideophones (Downing 2019). Thus, she argues that Tumbuka has both stress-like and tone-like properties.
- **No tonal contrast in nouns**:
  - a. m**úu**-nthu   'person'   ŵáa-nthu 'people'
  - b. m-l**íi**mi   'farmer'   ŵa-líimi 'farmers'
  - c. m-z**íi**nga   'bee hive' mi-zíinga   'bee hives'
  - d. m-s**íi**ka   market   mi-síika 'markets'

Verbs (from Downing 2019)

- **No tonal contrasts in verbs or verb paradigms**
    - a. ku-líima < *dìm- 'to farm'
    - ti-ku-líima 'we farm'
    - ti-ka-líima 'we farmed'
    - t-angu-líima 'we recently farmed'
    - n-a-ŵa-limíira 'I have farmed for them'
    - ŵ-a-líima 'they have farmed'
    - wa-zamu-líima 's/he will farm'

Verbs contin'd

- ku-z**ée**nga < *jèng- 'to build'
- z**ée**nga! 'build!'
- ti-ku-z**ée**nga 'we build'
- ti-ku-z**ée**nga 'we build'
- nyúumba yi-ku-zeng**ée**ka 'the house is being built'
- ŵa-ka-ku-zeng**ée**ra 'they built for you sg.'
- ŵa-ka-mu-zenger**áa**-ni 'they built for you pl.'
- Vowel length is also predictable

Ideophones: tone and vowel contrastive

- Kuli **yíí**   'It is deadly quiet.'
- zgeŵa   **yìì** 'lost completely'
- binkha **bi.** 'be very dirty.'
- mdima **bii**. 'very dark.'
- Luma **mbe** 'bite sharply'
- Mwezi wuli **mbee** 'the moon is bright'
- Tone is contrastive in the ideophones. So is vowel length in ideophones. (For more examples see (Mphande 1989:100-101))

Vowels

- Tumbuka has a five vowel system
- the vowel phonemes are **/i, e, a, o, u/**
- Vowel harmony – [+mid] **/e**/ and /**o**/ co-occur. [-mid vowels /i, a, u/ also co-occur
- As already stated, there is no phonemic contrast in vowel length except in ideophones. (see Downing 2019; Hamann, Miatto and Downing (2019)

Consonants

- Citumbuka has a range of consonants which include:

	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Alveolar		Palatal	Velar		glottal
plosives:	ph	th			ʧh	kh		
	p b		t	d		k	g	
fricatives:	β	f v	s	z	ʃ		ɣ	h
affricates:					ʧ ʤ			
nasals:	m		n		ɲ		ŋ	
glides:	w				y			
Lateral:			l					
Trill:			r					

Aspiration is contrastive in Citumbuka

- pala   'scrap'
- phala   'tell'
- tola   'take'
- thola   'remove a thorn from skin'
- pula   'pound'
- phula   'remove from fire'

Syllable structure

- Citumbuka only open syllables (Vail 1972)
- Canonical CVCV like most Bantu languages: ca-ka 'year' mu-tu 'head'
- VCVCV also possible: a-ma-ma 'my mother'
- Glide insertion and glide form where there is CVVCV
  - n-a-onga = nawonga 'I am grateful'

Nominal morphology

- Nouns across Bantu languages are categorised into different classes numbered conventionally

- Citumbuka has noun system with 18 noun classes (Vail 1972).

- The noun classes identified using prefixes and concord agreement. Semantic criteria may not be reliable

- Noun classes tend to exist in pairs. Class 1 pairs with 2, 3 with 4

- Some Bantu language have Polyplural classes, ie have singular classes corresponding with more than one plural classes e.g:

The noun classes

- Class 1 and 2 associated with human beings.
- But includes some animals and proper names of animates and non-animates eg: nyalubwe 'leopard, tiger', cimbwe 'hyena' , munkhwere 'monkey', Mzuzu, Rukuru
- Class 7/8 augmentatives e.g cimbale 'big plate'- vimbale 'big plates'; cikuni 'big tree' – vikhuni 'big trees'; cindere 'fool'- vindere 'fools'
- Class 11 is associated with elongated things: lulilimi 'tongue', luswazu 'whip', lulwivi 'chameleon', lulombo 'prayer',
-

Contin'd

- 12/13 diminutives:
  - Kambale 'small plate'   tumbale 'small plates';
  - kakuni 'small tree'   tukuni 'small trees';
  - kandere 'little fool'   tundere 'little fools'
- Class 14 is associated with abstract and non-countable nouns eg: ucanda 'cleanliness', ufu 'flour', ukazuzi, ucekulu
- Classes 16, 17, 18 locatives-have no plural counterparts
- Class 15 verbal nouns/the infinitival class.

Adjectives

- Citumbuka has several adjectival roots. They include:
  - -tali 'long', -kulu 'big', -wemi 'good', -swesi 'red', -ndere 'fool', -tuŵa 'white'
  - -zeleza 'fool', -coko/doko 'small', -fupi 'short', -canda 'clean', -lyalya 'crooked'
- -Adjectives can also be derived from verbal roots. In which case, apparently, the verb derives an infinitival nominal first:
  - -towa 'be beautiful' : -a-ku-towa 'something beautiful'
  - tuŵa 'become clean': -a-ku-tuŵa 'clean ones'
  - Cimbira 'run'   : -a-ku-cimbira 'fast ones'
- Adjectives have concords that agree with noun class of the modified noun

Numerals and demonstratives,

- Citumbuka counts items from 1 to 5 separately. then in 10s, 100s
- -moza   'one'
- -ŵiri   'two'
- -tatu   'three'
- -nayi   'four'
- -nkhondi   'five'
- -nkhondi na –moza   'six
- -nkhondi na –ŵiri   'seven'
- -nkhondi na –tatu   'eight'
- -nkhondi na –nayi 'nine'
- -khumi   'ten'   makhumi

Possessive pronouns

- -ane   'mine'
- -ako   'yours'
- -ake   'his'
- mama   'my mother'   dada   'my father'
- nyoko   'your mother'   wuso   'your father'
- nyina   'his mother   wiske 'his mother'

Demonstratives

- Three way distinction: very close (this), far (that), and very far (that).

Noun class	Proximal	Distal 1	Distal 2
Cl.1:	uyu	u-y-o	yu-la
Cl.2	a-ŵa	a-w-o	ŵa-la
Cl.3	u-w-u	u-w-o	wu-la
Cl.4	i-y-i	i-y-o	yi-la
Cl.5	i-l-I	i-l-o	li-la
Cl.5	a-gh-a	a-gh-o	gha-la
Cl.16	apa	a-p-o	pa-la
Cl.17	u-k-u	u-k-o	ku-la

Preposition *na*

- Comitative na has the following function: **and**, **with**, **by**,:

    a) John   na   Maria.

       1.John   with   1.Maria

       'John and Maria.'

    b) Somba   zi-ka-gul-ik-a   na   msambizgi

       10.Fish   10.SM-PST-PASS-FV   with   1.teacher

       'The fish were bought by the teacher.'

    c) Mwana wa-ka-lut-a   na   Masozi.

        1.child   1.SM-PST-go-FV   with   1.Masozi

Morphosyntactic structure

- Word order
- Subject marking
- Object marking
- Verbal derivation and argument structure

word order

- The basic word order for Citumbuka is SVO
- Other orders are relatively possible
- Eg:
- a) John   wa-ku-ly-a   switi.
  1.John   1.SM-PST-eat-FV   10.sweet
  'John eats sweets.'
  b) Switi, John wakulya. 'Sweets, John eats.'
  c) Wakulya switi John. 'John does eat sweets (a lot).'
  d) Wakulya John, switi. 'John eats sweets.'

Subject marking

- Citumbuka is a pro drop language.
- The subject appears in the initial position
- The subject agrees with the verb in terms of noun class
- Subject marking is compulsory regardless of the presence of the subject.

Examples:

a) Mliska   wa-ka-lut-a   mayilo.
    1.Pastor   1.SM-PST-go-FV   yesterday
    'The pastor went yesterday.'

b) Wa-ka-lut-a   mayilo.
    1.SM-PST-go-FV   yesterday
    'He went yesterday.'

C) *Mliska   ka-lut-a   mayilo.
    1.Pastor   PST-go-FV   yesterday
    'The pastor left yesterday.'

Object marking

- Varies across Bantu languages
- In Citumbuka, only one OM is allowed on the verb
- Only one object NP can be object marked
- Required when object is dropped, otherwise optional
- Can co-occur with the object itself

Object marking

- Examples:

a) Mbuzi   zi-ka-**u**-ly-a   utheka.

   10.goat   10.SM-PST-14.OM   14.grass

   'Goats ate/grazed the grass.'

b) Mbuzi   zi-ka-**u**-ly-a.

   10.goat   10.SM-PST-14.OM-eat-FV

   'Goats grazed it.'

examples

- Amama   ŵa-ka-**mu**-p-a   Fingani   skapato.
  my.mother1.SM-PST-1.OM-give-FV   1. Fingani   10.shoe
   'My mother gave the shoes to Fingani.'
- *Amama   ŵa-ka-**mu-zi-**p-a   Fingani   skapato.
  my.mother   1.SM-PST-1.OM-10.OM-give-FV 1. Fingani   10.shoe
   'My mother gave the shoes to Fingani.'
- Amama   ŵa-ka-**mu**-p-a   skapato.
  my.mother1.SM-PST-1.OM-give-FV   10.shoe
   'My mother gave her shoes.'

Verbal derivation and argument structure

- Verb extensions are common across Bantu. They are actually derivational affixes.

- There about surviving extensions in Citumbuka but only a few of them are productive

- The suffixation of any verb extension may change the valency of the base verb.

- Verb extensions are categorised into two: valency reducing and valency increasing

valency reducing extensions

- Extensions that reducing the verb valency by one
- They include the passive extension -ik-/-iw-, reciprocal -an-,
- The extension -ik- is also called the neuter, medio-passive, stative in Bantu literature (Schadeberg, 2003, 2019, Dom, 2015(?))
- -ik- also derives anticausatives, commonly known as statives in Bantu literature
- -ik- and -an- can also co-occur to derive anticausatives

Passive -ik- and -(i)w-

- Suppresses the agent.
- Backgrounds the agent.
- Examples:
a) Cimbwe   w-a-kol-a   mbuzi.
      1.hyena   1.SM-PERF-catch-FV   9.goat
      'A hyena has caught a goat.'
b) Mbuzi   y-a-kol-ek-a   (na   Cimbwe).
    9.goat   9.SM-PERF-catch-PASS-FV   with   1.hyena
    'A goat has been caught by a hyena.'
c) Mbuzi y-a-li-w-a (na Cimbwe). 'A goat has been caught by a hyena.

Anticausative

a) Ŵasepuka   ŵ-asw-a   gilasi.
   2.boy   SM-PERF-break-FV   5.glass

b) Gilasi   l-a-sw-ek-a.
   5.glass   5.SM-PERF-break-PASS-FV
   'The glass has broken.'

c) Suzgo   w-a-yi-sang-a   mbuzi   yi-la.
   1.Suzgo   1.SM-PERF-9.OM-find-FV   9.goat   9-DIST.3
   'Suzgo has found that goat .'

d) Mbuzi   yi-la   y-a-sang-ik-a.
   9.goat   9.DIST.3   9.SM-PERF-find-PASS-FV
   'That goat has been found.'

Potential

a) Cakulya c-akhe ci-ku-ly-ek-a   nthena.

   7.food   7.POSS 7.SM-PRS-eat-PASS-FV   so.so

   'His Food   is edible, at leat.'

a) Ngoma   zi-ku-gul-ik-a   muhanyawuno.

   10.maize 10SM.PRS-buy-PASS-FV   today

   'The maize is cheap (buyable) today.'

Reciprocal -an-

- Syntactically suppresses the patient (or the object)
- Also derives non-reciprocal constructions (Chavula 2016, 2021): deobjectives, anticausatives
- Examples of reciprocals:

a) Mary w-a-timb-a Eliza.

b) Mary na Eliza ŵ-a-timb-an-a.

c) Ŵasungwana ŵ-a-timb-an-a.

d) Msungwana wa-ku-timb-an-a.

e) Cingwe c-a-mang-an-a.

Valency increasing

- Two extensions: causatives and applicatives
- Causatives introduce a new subject, the causer
- Applicatives introduce an applied object
- In some cases, the applicative maintains the verb valency
- The two extensions can also function as verbalisers, deriving verbs from ideophones, adjectives, nouns

Causatives- -y-, -ik-, isk,

Applicatives

Summary