

Africana Linguistica. Vol. XIV. 2008.

Tervuren: Royal Museum for Central Africa.

The volume under review is focused exclusively on Bantu languages, which, so far, remain undoubtedly the most well-studied family of all language stocks in Africa. Seven articles in this volume, published both in English and French, concentrate on phonetic, morphological, and syntactic aspects of synchronic descriptions of certain Bantu tongues. Some diachronic implications are also present, and will be specifically emphasised in the present review. Each article contains abstracts in English and French.

The volume opens with an article by Maud Devos: 'The expression of modality in Shangaci', which gives a systematic description of the modality markers and their usage in a minor Bantu language of Mozambique, spoken by about 2,000 people and classified as a variety of Makhuwa (group P30 of the Bantu referential classification) influenced substantially by Swahili, the regional *lingua franca*. The typological basis for the analysis is the work by van der Auwera & Plungian (1998), which gets some valuable support from the author's own research. It is shown that Shangaci uses both analytical constructions and inflectional markers for building possibility and necessity meanings. Semantically, the language differentiates between participant-internal, participant-external, deontic, and epistemic modality. Of these, the participant-internal modality is not a part of the grammaticalized modal system, but is rather built by a derivational marker. All around the system, markers can overlap, i. e. the same forms or constructions can mark either necessity and modality depending on the context. Thus, most markers have multiple uses. From a diachronic perspective, it is important to note that the author traces the processes of grammaticalisation which led to the formation of the current modality system in Shangaci.

Boniface Kawasha makes a comparative analysis of relative clauses of several zone K and L Bantu languages in 'Relative clauses and subject inversion in Chokwe, Kaonde, Lunda and Luvale'. The author

demonstrates that the canonical rule of SVO word order is not always followed in those Bantu tongues which have independent relative markers. In Chokwe and Luvale, where relative markers are indeed independent, the inversion of verb-subject takes place instead in non-subject relative clauses. Moreover, it is emphasised that the prefixed relative elements of Lunda and Kaonde have, in fact, shared diachronic similarities with the independent particles of Chokwe and Luvale: the former have become bound to the verb in the process of grammaticalisation. The origins of independent relative markers in the two latter tongues are old demonstrative pronouns which added a relative function to their original anaphoric and deictic ones. This caused the elimination of the prefixed relative markers in several languages of zone K of Bantu.

'Nine vowels and ATR vowel harmony in Lika, a Bantu language in D.R. Congo' by Constance Kutsch Lojenga touches upon a rather rare vowel structure found in Lika (known also as Ki-Lika, usually treated as a zone D language). It is well known that Proto-Bantu is usually reconstructed with a '7V' system of vocalism (Hyman 2003, Schadeberg 2003), where **i* and **u* were represented in +/-ATR¹ pairs (having had **ɪ* and **v* counterparts, respectively). However, Lika is one of the smaller groups of Bantu languages with a nine-vowel system. In this language, *e* and *o* also have their -ATR counterparts. The +/-ATR vowel harmony is extremely widespread in Lika: it appears in both inflectional and derivational markers and the root itself, if the following suffix is +ATR. In her conclusion, the author raises the interesting question of the origins of the 9-vowel system in Lika and some other adjacent tongues in the region, which might well reflect a contact influence.

Yolande Nzang Bie presents 'La dérivation causative dans les langues bantu du groupe A70' ['The

¹ ATR: advanced tongue root position, a phonetic feature commonly used in Benue-Congo languages.

causative derivation in the Bantu languages of group A70'], a work that includes morphological data from four languages of this north-western Bantu group: Eton, Ewondo, Ntumu and Atsi. The origins of causative markers in Bantu have enjoyed particular attention in a number of recent papers, and a few hypotheses were suggested. However, as the author shows, the most convincing is the Proto-Bantu origin of the two causative markers in A70: *-a-* / *-e-* should go back to Proto-Bantu **-i-* which denoted causative, while the "long" causative suffix *-VI-* / *-IV-* must originate from **-id-*. The problem is that this latter is reconstructed as having had an appellative meaning, and the author tends to show that typologically, such a "marginal", as the author calls it, development is not uncommon. This is indeed true and can be shown on a number of Benue-Congo languages.

The article by Birgit Ricquier & Koen Bostoen ('Resolving phonological variability in Bantu lexical reconstructions: the case of 'to bake in ashes') is quite important for the methodology of historical linguistics in general. It not only deals with the reconstruction of a particular cultural term of the Proto-Bantu vocabulary, but also raises a more general question of homophonous roots with almost synonymic semantics reconstructed for Proto-Bantu. Indeed, a liberal approach to lexical reconstruction always leads to inflation of the number of roots attributed to the proto-language, whereas it is sometimes possible and even necessary to examine similar vocabulary entries more closely so as to merge them into one proto-language item. This problem is widely discussed in relation to the Indo-European etymological dictionary by Pokorny (1959) and many other dictionaries of this kind. In the latest corpus of Bantu Lexical Reconstructions (Bastin & Schadeberg 2003–2009) many synonyms can also be found and reanalysed. One of them, 'to bake in ashes', is present in four osculant forms:

**-bùmb-* (found in language zones A, H), **-dùmbuk-* (zones F, G, J, M, P, and S), **-bùmbuk-* (zone E) and **-gùmbuk-* (zones D, J). They vary in either the initial consonant or the impositive suffix **-ik-*. The author presents a solid analysis proving the existence of only one Proto-Bantu root **-bùmb-* 'to bake in ashes' and finding some external Benue-Congo correspondences for it. This is a good example of how both the external and internal comparative analysis can straighten the etymological dictionary.

Frank Siedel's 'The hodiernal past domain and the concept of recentness in Yeyi' analyses functions and semantic meanings of past tenses in Yeyi, the Bantu language of group R41. The system is a rather complicated one: Yeyi not only has hodiernal and prehodieral past tenses, but also distinguishes a perfective / imperfective opposition for hodiernal. A number of sample narrations from native speakers are given, and the whole semantic system of differentiating between recentness and non-recent events is explained in graphs.

Finally, an interesting morphological development is analysed by Mark Van De Velde in his 'Un cas de changement phonologique par réanalyse morphologique en éton' ['A case of phonetic change out of morphological reanalysis in Eton']. In this tongue, the possessive adjective of the 1st person singular ends in *-amɔ* in noun classes 1 or 3, but *-ama* in all other classes. This difference is explained by the author as a morphological reanalysis: it is shown through numerous morphological examples how the original *a* is represented by *ɔ*. The prosodic rules also contribute to the reanalysis of the form.

Overall, the volume upholds a high level of linguistic analysis and data presentation. It must be said, however, that limiting the range of publications to only those dealing with languages of the Bantu family seems a far more modest approach than *Africana Linguistica* can easily allow itself.

References

- Bastin & Schadeberg 2003–2009 — BASTIN, Ivonne & SCHADEBERG, Thilo (eds.). *Bantu Lexical Reconstructions 3*. <http://www.metafro.be/blr>
- Hyman 2003 — HYMAN, Larry. Sound Change, Misanalysis, and Analogy in the Bantu Causative // JALL. Vol. 24. Pp. 55–90.
- Pokorny 1959 — POKORNY, Julius. *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*. Bd. 1. Bern.
- Schadeberg 2003 — SCHADEBERG, Thilo. Derivation // NURSE, Derek & PHILIPPSON, Gérard (eds.). *The Bantu Languages*. London — New York: Routledge. Pp. 71–89.
- Auwers & Plungian 1998 — VAN DER AUWERA, J. & PLUNGIAN, V.A. Modality's Semantic Map // *Linguistic Typology*. Vol. 2. Pp. 79–124.