

KISWAHILI LANGUAGE DESCRIPTION AND TRANSLATIONAL GRAMMARS*

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ABSTRACT

There is a close relationship between grammatical description and language typology. I illustrate this relationship by looking at the impact of translational descriptions on our knowledge of noun phrase syntax and word morphology in Kiswahili. For example, one Bantu tradition describes locative nouns as prepositional nouns or adverbs and their phrases as PPs. The descriptions arise because the nouns translate as prepositions or adverbs or prepositional phrases in I.o.ds. Another tradition takes the view that Kiswahili locative nouns are not really nouns but forms of nouns. I conclude that language description ought to reflect not only the teacher's knowledge of the mechanics of linguistic science but also the typology of the I.u.d.

1. INTRODUCTION

The study will look at two main issues. 1. The relationship between language structure and language description in Kiswahili Bantu; and 2. Locative nouns and descriptive adequacy in Kiswahili Bantu. The method of class classification used in the study follows the one proposed in Amidu (1997b, 2002).

1.1 A Traditional Description of Prepositions in Kiswahili

* I am grateful to the anonymous reviewer for making pertinent comments and insightful observations that have improved my study. All shortcomings are, however, mine.

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Ashton (1947: 195) writes that, "IN Swahili there are no Bantu words which are basically prepositions, but there are a few words based on the -A of Relationship which may be termed so." She names *kwa* 'by means of, by, with', *na* 'with, by' and P.C. + *-a* 'of, for' as her basic types.¹ Next, Ashton (1947: 195) asserts that "There are also numerous phrases, i.e. compounds based on *kwa*, *na* and *-a*." Examples of these compounds fall into three groups. The first group is represented in (1).

- (1) a. *kwa habari ya*
'about, concerning'
b. *kwa sababu ya*
'because of'

The second group is represented in (2).

- (2) a. *chini ya*
'below'
b. *ndani ya*
'inside'
c. *nje ya*
'outside'

The third group is represented in (3).

- (3) a. *chini yangu*
'under me'
b. *mahali petu*
'instead of us'

All the data are taken from Ashton (1947: 195). Her description of the data as prepositions or (prepositional) compound phrases is inaccurate. In addition, apart from (3), none of the data is a complete phrase in Kiswahili. Significantly, Ashton's descriptions overlook her

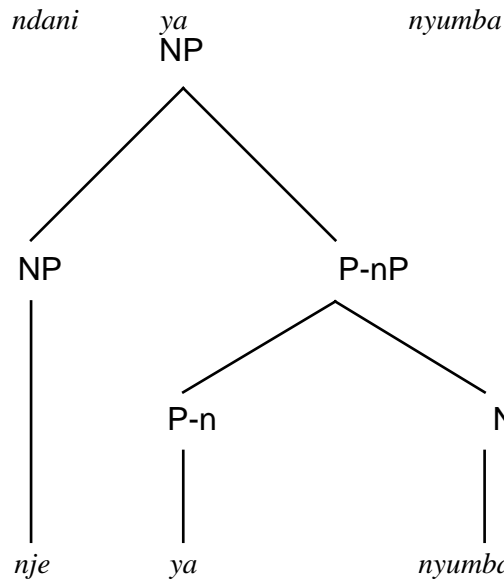
¹ In this study, l.o.d means 'language of description', l.u.d stands for 'language under description', and P.C. means 'pronominal concord'. The -A or -a of relationship is an adnominal lexid or root. It requires a P.C. to be a word. The 'O' particle or topicalizer is also called 'O' of reference. It generally requires a P.C. to be a topicalized concord affix or a word. Its presence often refers to a topic-argument or something already mentioned in the text or discourse or to definiteness.

rather insightful observations that say there are few words in Bantu that are truly prepositions. Why does Ashton overlook her empirical observations? We provide an answer to this question by drawing attention to some of the shortcomings of constructions like (1)-(3) within Kiswahili grammar and propose alternative descriptions where required.

2. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LANGUAGE STRUCTURE AND LANGUAGE DESCRIPTION

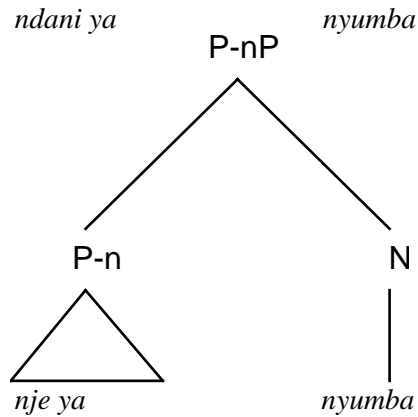
Ashton's descriptions of (1)-(3) are based on the techniques of translational grammars. They are founded on the principle that given knowledge of English or French grammar, all one needs to do in writing a grammar of Kiswahili or other unwritten languages, is to present the material in such a way that English or French nationals can easily understand it. We illustrate the problem as follows: *ndani* or *nje* is syntactically a polysemic noun in Kiswahili. *Ndani* means 'the inside, the inner part, inside of, within' in Kiswahili. *Nje* means 'the outside, the outer part, outside of, without'. Let us take *ndani* for example. It is generally translated as *in* in English, *dans* in French. Grammatically, therefore, *ndani* is described as a preposition or adverb in Kiswahili grammar to this day even though it is a polysemic noun in the l.u.d, and it forms noun phrases in the language. For example, *ndani ya nyumba* 'the inside of the house, in the house' is an NP. In the NP, the word *ya* 'of' is an adnominal genitive. It is in concord with its N-head *ndani*. The complement of the adnominal genitive is *nyumba* 'house'. If we turn to *nje* 'the outside', we find that it also translates as *out* in English and *dehors* in French. As a result, *nje* is described as a preposition or adverb in Kiswahili even though it is a noun and occurs in noun phrase structure, e.g. *nje ya nyumba* 'the outside of the house'. A maximal tree structure representation of phrases of this type is given in (4).

(4)



P-nP = nominal predication, traditionally PP, and P-n = nominal predicate, traditionally P or Prep (Amidu 1997b). Having described *ndani* and *nje* in terms of their nearest translational functions in English, French, etc., the NPs in (4) are described as prepositional phrases. Observe that the approach is not concerned with the typological structure of L2 but of relating L2 to L1. To this end, the grammarian overlooks empirical observations that correctly apply to L2 (Ashton 1947). Observe how, in (5), the head NP *ndani* or *nje* plus the prepositional element P or P-n *ya* are written together as *ndani ya* or *nje ya* and are described as (prepositional) compound phrases in traditional grammar.

(5)

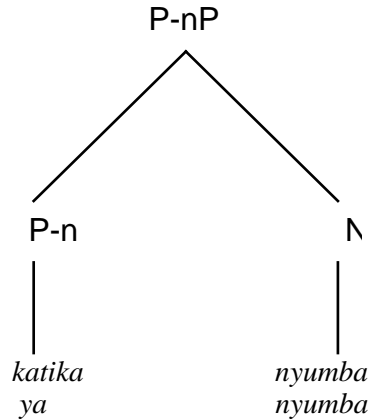


In Kiswahili itself, (4) is the correct description not (5). Observe how the traditional method of description has compelled linguists and grammarians to redraw their phrase structure diagrams such that the NP in (4) comes out as a compound in (2) and a P-nP or PP in (5) (Maw 1969, Amidu 1980). The evidence demonstrates that the way we analyse the structure of a language determines the typological views that learners will have about it and its language family after their training.

2.1 Further Disadvantages of Translational Grammars in Language Description

Translational methods have other drawbacks in Kiswahili. For example, they obscure the fact that nouns are used in Kiswahili to express what other languages use prepositions or adverbs to express. They also obscure the fact that nouns, such as *ndani* 'inside', differ from prepositions like *ya* 'of' in Kiswahili (Amidu 1980). Examples of other prepositions named by Ashton (1947) are *na* 'with, and', *kwa* 'with, for, to' and *katika* 'in, on, from, among'. The phrase *katika nyumba* 'in the house' is a prepositional phrase and differs from the NP *ndani ya nyumba* 'the inside the house'. Compare (4) with (6) below.

(6)



Kiswahili prepositions differ in their structures too. For example, in (4), the adnominal *ya* 'of' has an external agreement concord of class 9 NI₁ {i}, and so, it agrees syntactically with its head noun *ndani* or *nje*. The concord becomes a palatal glide [y] before the vocalic stem {a} of the adnominal morpheme or predicate, hence the output *ya* 'of'. *Na* and *kwa*, on the other hand, may take external N-heads but do not take overt external concords of classes within an NP. Consider the phrases *wali na samaki* 'rice with/and fish' and *wali kwa samaki* 'rice with/and fish'. Observe that the phrases fit within (4) but not within (5) or (6). Observe further that neither *na* nor *kwa* takes overt external agreement with *wali* 'cooked rice' of class 14 U₂. *Na* and *kwa* may, however, take overt internal concords of their complements, as in (7).

(7) M-kulima na-ye m-toto.

Cl. 1 he/she-farmer CONJ-and/with-Cl. 1 OM he/she/it Cl. 1
 he/she/it-child
 'A farmer with/and the child'.

Naye 'with/and he/she/it' in (7) consists of the so-called preposition *na* 'and, with' followed by the 'O' topicalized class concord {ye} of class 1 MU₁. The concord {ye} agrees with *mtoto* 'child' the internal argument or complement of the P-n (see (11) below). The concord {ye} gives *mtoto* a definite reading as opposed to an indefinite one. *Katika* does not

show overt external or internal concords, but it appears to have an underlying external concord. We discover this, for example, when *katika* is followed by a complement, as in (6), and the phrase functions as external subject or internal object argument of a Pn-S, as in (8).²

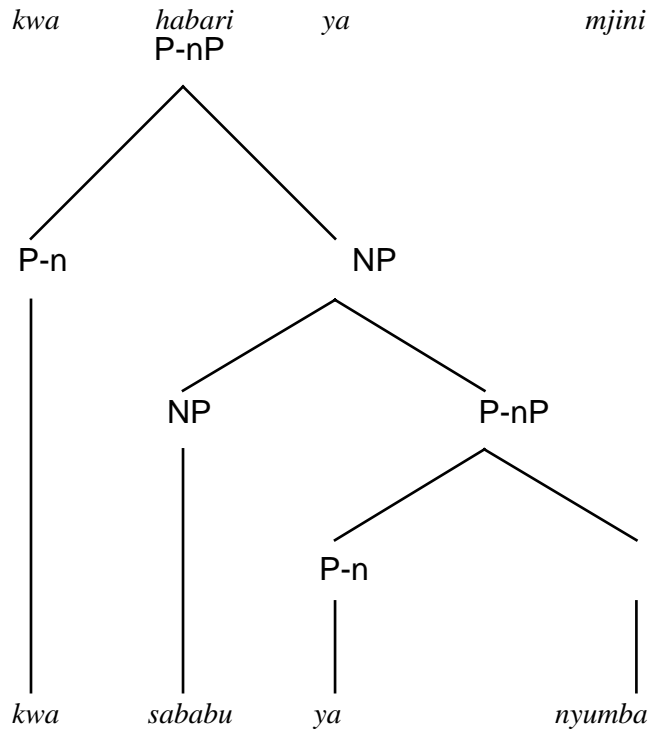
- (8) *Katika duka m-melala panya.*
Cl. 17/26-in Cl. 5 it-shop Cl. 17/26 SM there-RECENT PAST-sleep
Cl. 10/2 they-mouse
'In the shop there are sleeping mice'

In (8), *katika duka* is the external subject NP of the Pn-S and it generates the locative SM {m} in the PC *mmelala* accordingly. *Katika*, therefore, generates locative class 17/26 NI₃ (or classes 16-18 of traditional grammar) agreement concords in a PC. For more on these structures, see Amidu (2001). The ability of so-called prepositions in Kiswahili to exhibit external or internal agreement concords, or both, in their word structures, has led me to call them nominal predicates (P-n). Their phrases are nominal predications (P-nP) (Amidu 1997b, 2001). See also (11) below. In Kiswahili, P-n's are not barriers to case and theta assignment (Amidu 2001). The concord generating ability of *katika* stems from the historical merger of the noun *kati* 'the middle' of class 12 KA with its adnominal *ka* 'of' (Amidu 1980). Grammaticalization became possible following the death of class 12 KA in Kiswahili. As the class was dying out, NP *kati* was reanalysed as a constituent of P-n *ka* and this gave birth to today's P-n *katika*. *Katika* is today distinct from the noun *kati* which now belongs to classes 9/10, NI₁/NI₂ and also 17/26 NI₃. Nominal predicates or prepositions differ, therefore, from nouns in Kiswahili, but translational grammars blur the distinctions.

Let us now look at the issue of compound (prepositional) phrases. Data in (1) exhibit a structure that is different from (2)-(3) and this is shown in (9).

² Pn-S stands for 'predication-sentence', and PC stands for 'predicate constituent'.

(9)



The phrase *kwa habari ya mjini* means 'concerning news of the town' and *kwa sababu ya nyumba* means 'by reason/because of the house'. In (9), the lexical head of each phrase is the nominal predicate *kwa* 'by, with, for, concerning'. Its structural description is P-n or Prep and its phrasal head is P-nP or PP. If we compare (9) with (1), we might conclude that the latter could possibly qualify as a compound phrase in Ashton's sense. How motivated is a description of (9) as a compound (prepositional) phrase in Kiswahili? The term 'compound phrase' is ambiguous in Kiswahili. Structurally, the P-nP or PP in (9) is not a compound (prepositional) phrase. This is because the P-n + NP may exhibit the same kind of agreement relationship found in (7) above. An example that illustrates this point appears in (10).

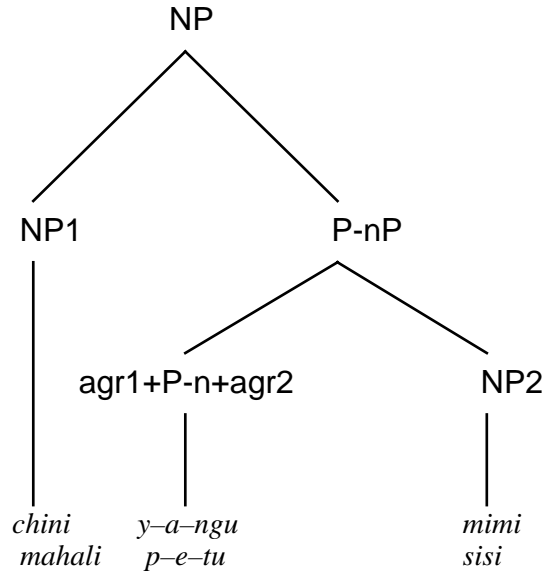
(10) *Kwa-yo habari y-a mji-ni.*

CONJ-with-Cl. 9 OM it Cl. 9-news Cl. 9-of Cl. 17/26-town
'Concerning news of the town'.

Kwayo 'with it' in (10) consists of the so-called preposition *kwa* 'with, concerning' followed by the 'O' topicalized class concord {yo} of class 9 NI₁. The concord {yo} agrees with *habari* 'news, report' the internal argument or complement of the P-n (see also (11) below). The concord {yo} gives *habari* a definite reading. We see in (10) that the so-called preposition *kwa* can, in theory and practice, agree with its internal argument complement phrase in Kiswahili (Amidu 1997b, 2001, for discussions). The evidence reveals that quite often strings that are called (prepositional) compounds P-nP or PP in Kiswahili grammar, as in (1), are in fact nominal strings. In addition, when data such as (1) and (9)-(10) are called compound phrases, this obscures the fact that there are genuine compound prepositional phrases in Kiswahili that consist of two sequential P-ns or Preps (see § 2.2 below).

Finally, (3) fits into the structure (4) above but not (9). We replace (4) with (11) below to bring out the morphological AGR features of the string.

(11)



In the first of the examples in (3) or (11), *chini* 'the bottom, underpart' is the N-head of the NP and *yangu* 'my' is its modifying possessive adjective or pronoun. *Yangu* is in concord with its head classwise through the affix {i} of class 9 NI₁. {i} becomes a glide [y] before the initial vocalic of *-angu* 'my, mine'. The P-n *yangu* also contains an internal possessive agreement marker {ngu} 'my, mine'. Its N-head is the 1st person singular pronoun *mimi* 'I, me'. (11) brings out the morphological external and internal concords in the P-n *yangu* clearly (Amidu 1997b: 343-361). The predicate inside the P-n is the adnominal {a} called by Ashton, p. 195, the "A of Relationship". Observe that the internal head of {ngu} is unrealized in (3a). In (11), however, the head is present under NP2. In (3b) or (11), *mahali* 'place/s, space/s' is the N-head of *petu* 'our'. *Petu* is in concord with its head via the external affix {pa}. It is also in concord with an internal head whose concord is the possessive agreement marker {itu} 'our, ours'. The internal head of {itu} is unrealized in (3b), but it is realized in (11) as *sisi* 'we, us' under NP2. NP *sisi* is the 1st person plural pronoun. The predicate in *petu* is the adnominal {a}, but observe that {a} + {itu} > {etu}, i.e. [a] + [i] > [e].

Next {pa} + {etu} > petu, i.e. [a] + [e] > [e]. (11) illustrates the claim that Kiswahili prepositions are better called nominal predicates because they often take external NP and/or internal NP concord/s (Amidu 1997b, for details).

The noun *juu* 'the top, upper part' translates as 'on, up', *mbele* 'the front, front part' translates as 'in front of', *nyuma* 'the back, hind part', translates as 'back, behind', *kati* 'the middle, centre', translates as 'between, in the middle' in English. They are generally described as prepositions or adverbs in Kiswahili grammar because of their translations.

It seems clear that a translational description of Kiswahili misses important typological points of connection and difference that exist between L1 English, French, etc. and L2 Kiswahili and, vice versa, between L1 Kiswahili and L2 English, French, etc.

2.2 Advantages of Critical Analyses in Linguistics

There is a major reason for objecting to translational grammars in principle. They convey not only a false picture about the internal structure of African languages, but also the misanalysed data are often used subsequently for other linguistic claims. For example, we find in a tree diagram by Heine and Reh (1984), that the concord requiring adnominal {a} predicate is left undescribed. By not assigning a description to *ya* 'of' in PS, Heine and Reh (1984) derive a structure NP–NP in their model. That is, NP *juu ya mlima* 'the top of the mountain, on the mountain' becomes structurally *juu (ya) mlima* 'on the mountain', hence NP–NP. Observe that *ya* 'of' becomes an optional element of structure in the derivation. Next, the optional *ya* is reanalysed as a constituent of *juu* and the output is *juu ya* exactly as in (2) and (5). They write, on p. 101 of their study, that "Adjustment has the effect of turning the NP–NP constituent into a prepositional phrase [...]". The output {Prep {*juu ya*} + {*mlima*} NP} is used to support their hypothesis about the grammaticalization of NP as PP in languages. Thus, inspired by Ashton (1947) and others, the result of the artificially generated phrase structure (5) has ended up as a process of grammaticalization, i.e. NP–NP > PP.

Firstly, in our view, (4) and (11) do not support the readjustment claim in Kiswahili. This is because *ndani* and *ya* or *yangu* display an agreement relationship of class 9 NI₁ in NP structure in which *ndani* is

the noun head and *ya* or *yangu* is the modifying item of the head. In addition, in Kiswahili and Bantu, nominal predicate phrases or prepositional compounds do not show nominal agreement concords among themselves. They may exhibit agreement markers only with heads and complements (see (7) and (10) above). The occurrence of agreement marking within a so-called prepositional compound phrase, such as *ndani* and *ya* or *yangu* is often a necessary and sufficient test of the fallacy of a grammaticalization hypothesis, such as NP-NP > PP, in Kiswahili. When internal Bantu evidence and morphology are taken into account, we discover that the generalizations of Heine and Reh (1984) could be illustrated with other kinds of data, e.g. *katika*. The linguists did not, however, cite the only true case in Kiswahili of the kind of grammaticalization they were referring to (see (6) and (8) above).

Secondly, we do not deny the existence of double prepositions, or compound prepositions in languages. All that we are stressing here is that what are called compound preposition phrases in traditional Kiswahili grammars are nominal phrases. Observe, that *kwa sababu ya* translates into English as 'because of' and it is the I.-E. translational equivalent string *because of* that is given to the Kiswahili string as its grammatical description and from which the Kiswahili string is also said to be a compound phrase. Strictly speaking (1) does not contain a single compound (prepositional) phrase and (9)-(10) confirm this to be true. On theoretical grounds, therefore, if (5) were motivated, we would have to claim that compound prepositional phrases Prep1 + Prep2 exhibit internal concords in grammars in languages of the world. Such a claim might be difficult to defend inductively for examples like *because of*, *out of* in English. We have suggested above that there are genuine Prep1 + Prep2 compounds in Kiswahili grammar. Amidu (2001) refers to cases like *watoto wa kwa mama* 'children from the mother's side' in Kiswahili. Here, we find a serial Prep *wa kwa* 'of from'.³ There is no concordial relationship between *wa* and *kwa* in Kiswahili, just as there is none between *because* or *out* and *of* in English. Pn-P or PP in (9) is a nominal

³ Amidu (2001: 268, footnote 3) suggests that,

"We see that the double preposition above is a derived structure and it is not an inherent one as found in Norwegian. [...]. All the same, if we assume that the serial Preps. or P-n's are grammaticalized in some way, then we could admit double nominal predicates or prepositions into the Bantu syntactic grammar as well."

prepositional or predicate phrase. It is not a compound in the sense of compound prepositional phrases like *wa kwa*.

3. LOCATIVE PHRASES AND NON-LOCATIVE PHRASES IN KISWAHILI

The nouns *ndani*, *nje*, *chini*, *juu*, *nyuma*, *mbele*, *kati*, etc. and their phrases may be used as locative denoting strings or non-locative denoting strings in Kiswahili. The difference between the types shows up on the kinds of concords generated in dependent items and especially in PCs. *Ndani* is historically a locative noun in Kiswahili with the structure {nda} + {ni}. {ni} is the class 17/26 NI₃ (traditionally classes 16-18) marker and {nda} 'interior' is the lexid or stem of the noun. In the synchronic grammar, it is often classified in noun classes 9/10 or NI₁/NI₂ which are non-locative classes. The noun has become degrammaticalized in relation to its original class, but it is still able to generate either non-locative concords of class 9 NI₁ or locative concords of class 17/26 NI₃ in PCs without necessarily changing classes 9/10 concords in NP at S-structure. As a result, locative and non-locative functions have become interchangeable in the grammar. Illustrations follow below. The noun *chini* 'ground' is also historically a locative noun like *ndani* with the internal structure {chi} + {ni}. {chi}, also {ti}, means 'ground, earth'. Over time, *chini* has acquired classes 9/10, NI₁/NI₂, concords. (12a)-(12b) below illustrate the inflectional allomorphy referred to above.

(12) a. Nda-ni mw-a ny-umba m-na wa-tu.

Inner part-there Cl. 17/26 Cl. 17/26 there-of Cl. 9 it-house Cl. 17/26
SM there-COP-be with Cl. 2 they-person
'Inside the house there are people, lit. in the interior of the house are people'

(12) b. Nda-ni y-a ny-umba m-na wa-tu.

Inner part-there Cl. 17/26 Cl. 9/(17/26) there-of Cl. 9 it-house Cl.
17/26 SM there-COP-be with Cl. 2 they-person
'Inside the house there are people, lit. in the interior of the house are people'

In (12b), the adnominal *ya* has a default concord {i} of class 9 NI₁ instead of the locative concord {mw} of class 17/26 NI₃ in (12a). As

proposed in Amidu (1997b, 2002, 2003), these alternations are best treated as displaying a pattern of allonominal allomorphic inflections of a common underlying morpheme. Now, compare (12) with (13) below.

(13) N-dani y-a ny-umba i-na wa-tu.

Cl. 9 it-inner part Cl. 9 it-of Cl. 9 it-house Cl. 9 SM it-COP-be with
Cl. 2 they-person

'Inside the house there are people, lit. the interior of the house is with people'

(13) is a non-locative construction and this is reflected in all its agreement elements, i.e. adnominal *ya* in NP and SM {i} in PC *ina* 'it has'. If we compare (13) with (12), we see that the locative (12a) has a locative marker {mw} in the adnominal *mwa* 'of' in the NP. Sometimes a default *ya* occurs as in (12b). (12) also has a locative SM {m} in the PC *mna* 'there is'. The evidence shows that today both 9/10 and 17/26 inflectional patterns are used in the language and are often interchangeable. By analogy, *juu*, *mbele*, *nyuma*, *kati* of classes 9/10, NI₁/NI₂, also display the same duality of function in the grammar as *ndani* and *chini*.

Paradoxically, (12) and (13) require the same kind of translation in English. If a linguist treats (12) as involving a prepositional or adverbial phrase subject on account of its English translation, he or she would have to make the same claim about (13) (Ashton 1947). The classes 9/10, NI₁/NI₂, have never been described as 'prepositional or adverbial classes' in Bantu. Thus, if a Bantuist compares data (12)-(13) syntactically rather than translationally, he or she will realize that there is no necessary correlation between the syntax of L1 and its translational meaning in L2 and, vice versa, between L2 syntax and its translational strings in L1. A tree structure will also confirm that both (12) and (13) fit within (4) and (11) and not within (5) or (6). The syntax of (12)-(13) undermines the case for adjustments like (5) in Bantu. In addition, a theory about prepositionality or adverbiality in the classes conflicts with existing classifications of the classes into entity denoting and locative denoting classes as well as the terms in them (Amidu 1980, Hurskainen 1994, Maho 1999). This is due to the fact that non-locative strings in Bantu, such as (13), can and do translate as adverbial or prepositional strings in I.-E. languages. Observe also that *mjini* in (10) is grammatically locative, but its sense is really non-locative in the datum. The evidence reveals

that, despite the claims of grammatical and linguistic works, there is no class that is exclusively a prepositional or adverbial class in Bantu (Amidu 1980, 1997b, 2001, 2002). For example, classes 7/8, KI/VI and 14 U₂ have nouns and nominals that also have so-called adverbial-like functions or meanings in Kiswahili, e.g. *kishamba* 'farm-like', *vizuri* 'very well', *uzuri* 'very well' (Ashton 1947). None of the classes are called adverbial classes on account of the actual use, or even translational senses, of their lexical nouns or nominals in any Bantu grammar. In Bantu, therefore, nounhood or nominalhood is distinct from the syntactic use to which a nominal is put in PS. Thus, a nominal may well appear in PS as an adjunct (A'), either in NP or in predication structure, but this, in itself, does not licence us to call the nominal an adverb or adverbial phrase in the l.u.d. Traditional Bantu grammars blur the distinction between nominal and use of nominal, in short form versus function, in their descriptions when they adopt translational grammatical descriptions as the models for describing the lexical categories of languages like Kiswahili.

4. LOCATIVE NOUNS AND DESCRIPTIVE ADEQUACY IN KISWAHILI BANTU

Hurskainen (1994), Maho (1999), Maw (1999), McGrath and Marten (2003), and others deny the existence of noun to noun derivations or inflections in grammars. The debate centres on locative nouns. In order to address the issue, we need to ask the following question: Are there locative nouns in Kiswahili and Bantu or not?

On the one hand, Steere (1870), Doke (1943), Welmers (1973), Amidu (1980, 1997a, 1997b, 2001) argue that syntactic and morphological evidence suggest that Bantu locative lexical heads are nouns in the class systems. Doke (1943: 26) states it bluntly: "these locatives have a true noun use commanding sentence concord". Doke (1943) unfortunately treats locative lexical heads as primarily adverbial or prepositional items, hence the import of his observation. Doke's adverbial thesis is the result of translational grammatical principles. Even so, he recognizes the noun functions of locative lexical noun heads in Bantu.

On the other hand, Hurskainen (1994: 10) claims that locative lexical heads are not nouns but only "locative forms of nouns". According to

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him, an assertion to the effect that nouns with what he calls an optional suffix *-ni* constitute a locative noun class is a strange kind of argumentation. Why, he argues, should such constructions be considered as forming a specific locative noun class, while the nouns are already members of their noun classes? What Hurskainen means is that given two nouns, such as *mji* 'town' and *mjini* 'in the town', the latter cannot belong to a noun class because {*mji*} the lexid or stem of the word *mjini* allegedly belongs to a noun class. For Hurskainen, therefore, the inflectional class affix {*ni*} of *mjini* is optional. Hurskainen (1994) confuses stems or lexids of words with lexical words in language descriptions. He also confuses inflectional derivation with lexical derivation. This is unfortunate for African linguistics analyses. Maho (1999: 96) echos Hurskainen's views on locatives generally. He writes,

Some authors state a single class with one prefix only, whereas in the section of 'adverbs' and 'prepositions', they all speak of three locative prefixes [...]. Thus locative classes are often described separately from the noun classes. This is partly due to the fact that besides a very small number of basic roots classified in the locative classes, they are mostly used with nouns of other classes. And often the derivative result is not used as a noun at all, but as an adverb.

Similar views are found in Maw (1999), McGrath and Marten (2003) and in several Bantu works referred to in (Amidu 1980). The weakness of Maho's analysis lies in its conclusion. If a noun is derived as a new noun by another class affix, surely the output is a noun, and whether the output translates, or is used, as an adverb is a matter of translation rather than a matter of nounhood or constituent category principles in the grammar (see §§ 2.1, 3 above). I shall return to this question of lexical derivation again in §§ 4.1-4.2 below.

Which of the two traditions is motivated in linguistics? Let us consider (14)-(15).

- (14) M-ji hu-u w-ote u-mejaa wa-tu
Cl. 3 it-town this-it Cl. 3 Cl. 3 it-entire Cl. 3 SM it-RECENT PAST-
be full-MOD. Cl. 2 they-person
'This entire town is full of people.'

(15) Mji-ni hu-mu m-ote m-mejaa wa-tu

Town-there Cl. 17/26 this-there Cl. 17/26 Cl. 17/26 there-entire Cl.
17/26 SM it-RECENT PAST-be full-MOD. Cl. 2 they-person

'This entire town is full of people, lit. in this entire town is full of
people.'

Morphology teaches us that a stem or lexid of a word is not itself a lexical word at the sub-morphemic level and the affix of a word is not optional if it is a meaning changing operand. Morphologically, therefore, if we compare (14) with (15), we discover that *mji* 'town' differs from *mjini* 'in the town' both in structure and meaning. The former has a class affix {m} realized prefixally, while the latter has a class affix {ni} realized suffixally. Observe that, derivationally, *mjini* in (15) is partially related phonologically to *mji* in (14). We might say that a morphological process converts the word *mji* into a lexical lexid or stem {mji}. As the stem or lexid of *mjini*, {mji} is no longer a lexical word but a sub-morphemic unit. A class word in Kiswahili and Bantu must have a class affix and a lexid or stem obligatorily. More significantly, since the meaning of *mji* differs from the meaning of *mjini* according to whether the inflectional affix {ni} is present or not in the word, morphology requires us to treat {ni} as a distinctive word class changing morpheme and not as an allomorph or optional unit of word structure. It follows that a claim to the effect that {ni} is an optional affix signals a certain lack of familiarity with morphological methods and theory on the part of the language teacher. Furthermore, a claim to the effect that locative affixes "are mostly used with nouns of other classes" is not really informative and, in addition, it tends to suggest a certain unfamiliarity with morphological derivation and constituent category principles on the part of the language teacher. These weaknesses can be demonstrated easily. For example, we have seen above that, theoretically, Bantu nouns have lexids or stems as basic units of lexicality obligatorily. For this reason, whether the stems are *basic* or *derived* is immaterial to nounhood and nominality in Bantu and in linguistics generally (see §§ 4.1-4.2 below). It is the syntactic function in PS together with what Fowler (1971: 44) calls "supplementary morphological and transformational criteria" that determine nounhood and nominality in grammars. If this were not so, deverbal nouns, denominal nouns, deadjective nouns, deadverbial nouns, etc. would not qualify as nouns or nominals in any grammar of the world (Bauer 1983, Katamba 1993, Amidu 1997b, 2001).

Other nominal words also have suffixes as class markers. Observe that the demonstrative nominal words *hu-u*, *hu-mu* in (14)-(15) have suffixes as concord markers. In much the same way, lexical nouns like *mji-ni* have the suffix {ni} as the class locative marker in Kiswahili. Bantu internal evidence reveals, therefore, that a class word may have a prefix as a marker or a suffix as a marker and both types convert the lexids or stems they occur with into class nominal words. Even in predicate verbs in several Bantu languages, 'O' topicalized class markers may occur as suffixes. Theoretically, what this means is that the left to right or right to left ordering of affixes relative to nominal lexids or stems is not a barrier to nounhood in Bantu. In short, some lexids take class prefixes in word structure, others take class suffixes, and others, like the predicate lexids, can take prefixes, infixes and suffixes.

Syntactically, the nouns, *mji* and *mjini* are constituent elements in PS and govern the same kind of modifying items. That is, both govern demonstrative {h-} 'this', e.g. *huu* versus *humu*. Both govern the quantific modifier {ote} 'entire', e.g. *wote* versus *mote*. Both are subjects of their verbs, i.e. *umejaa* versus *mmejaa*, and show SM as {u} versus {m} in the PCs. Finally, the complement object *watu* 'people' of the PCs is the same in both strings. If *mji* is syntactically an NP of the type noun, then so too is *mjini* an NP of the type noun, and the reverse is also true. Lexically, the nouns, *mji* and *mjini* belong to different noun classes in Kiswahili and their distinctive agreement patterns underpin this difference.

Semantically, (14) and (15) are exactly synonymous and are interchangeable in Kiswahili antecedent usage. This means that a speaker may use one or the other to express the same communication intention in a context of performance. We saw a similar choice in (11)-(12). The evidence reveals that the speaker has a choice of lexical systems at his or her disposal, e.g. *mji* versus *mjini*. Lexical choice gives rise to choices of allosynic and synonymous predications such as (14)-(15) in the grammar.

The problem with translational grammar is that its approach has produced untenable syntactic structures and lexical category elements for Kiswahili that learners acquire as part of their grammar. To correct this problem, learners should be taught that *mji* 'town', *mjini* 'in town', *kiti* 'chair', *kitini* 'in the chair', *duka* 'shop', *dukani* 'at the shop', *nyumba* 'house', *nyumbani* 'home, to the house', etc. are all nouns in Kiswahili. In the same way, *kishamba*, *vizuri* and *uzuri* are all nominals in Kiswahili.

Qualificative adjectives like *locative*, *adverbial*, *prepositional*, *verbal*, *derived*, *entity*, etc. do not change nounhood or nominalhood in Bantu just because they modify the category term *noun* (Amidu 1980, 1997b, 2001).

4.1 The Paradox of Noun to Noun Inflections and Derivations in Morphology

There are additional cogent lexical reasons for rejecting arguments against denominal nouns, namely, noun to noun derivations in Kiswahili classes. Derivation and conversion from one form class into another form class and derivation within the same form class are natural to all languages of the world (Amidu 1997b: 83, 146-151). Recall that Maho (1999: 96) states that "locative classes are often described separately from the noun classes". This implies that locative classes are not noun classes in Bantu, at least for some Bantuists, e.g. Hurskainen (1994), Maw (1999), McGrath and Marten (2003), etc. If we agree, therefore, that locative nouns are not really nouns and do not form a noun class, we would be required also to agree that one cannot derive nouns from nouns as matter of linguistic principle (Amidu 1997b). In such a case, we would be compelled to claim that, for example, *kijiwe* 'small stone', *umtu* 'humanity', *majitu* 'giants', and *nyuso* 'faces' do not belong to noun classes in Kiswahili and are not really nouns. The obvious reason is that the lexids or stems *-jiwe* 'stone', *-mtu* 'person', *-jitu* 'giant' and *-uso* 'face' are already found in other noun classes (Hurskainen 1994). Their prefixes would, following Hurskainen (1994), also become optional prefixes on analogy with {ni} of *mjini*.

Linguistically, *kijiwe* vrs *jiwe* 'stone', *umtu* vrs *mtu* 'person', *majitu* vrs *jitu* 'a giant', and *nyuso* vrs *uso* 'a face' are all nouns in their own noun classes, namely classes 1 MU₁, 5 JI, 6 MA₁, 7 KI, 10 NI₂, 11 U₁ and 14 U₂. On analogy with our description of *mjini*, we can affirm that it is not the lexids or stems of *kijiwe*, *umtu*, *majitu* and *nyuso* that belong to the classes above. It is each entire lexical word that belongs to a class. It follows that words like *mjini*, *kijiwe*, etc., are members of different noun classes in Kiswahili Bantu according to the inflectional affixes they bear, the agreement concords they generate and the syntactic patterns they enter into in PS (Amidu 1980, 1997b, 2001).

4.2 The African Linguist Face to Face with Indo-European Traditions

There are analogical derivations in English data that support noun to noun derivations or inflections in Kiswahili. For example, *prince* is an English noun, and when the suffix *-dom* is added to it, we get the new noun *princedom*; when the suffix *-ess* is added to it we get the noun *princess*. In addition, when the suffixes *-let* and *-ling* are added to *prince*, we get *princelet* and *princeling* respectively (Allan 1990). *Count* is a noun, and when the suffix *-ship* is added to it, we get the new noun *countship*. Likewise, *extortion*, *exhibition*, *balloon* and *motor* are nouns, but when the suffix *-ist* is added to each one, we get the new nouns *extortionist*, *exhibitionist*, *balloonist* and *motorist*. These patterns of noun to noun derivations have been discussed by Matthews (1972, 1974), Amidu (1980, 1997a, 1997b), Comrie and Thompson (1985), Allen (1990), Katamba (1993). Observe that each pattern in English defines a class of nouns even if the input noun is not treated as a lexid or stem of the output. The *-dom* class of words indicates rank, status, etc. The *-ess* suffix describes a class of female nouns, etc. The *-ship* suffix refers to a class of nouns denoting office, status, etc. Finally, the suffix *-ist* describes either members of a profession or a class of people who use objects, etc. (Allen 1990). The English derived nouns differ, therefore, in their noun classes.

There are also analogical inflections in English that support the claims of noun to noun inflections in grammars (Amidu 1997b). In English, we have the words *boy*, *girl*, *duck*, and *doctor* in the grammar. If we add the plural inflectional morpheme {s} to the words, we get *boys*, *girls*, *ducks* and *doctors*. We say that the former are singular nouns of underlying lexemes BOY, GIRL, DUCK and DOCTOR and the latter are plural nouns of the lexemes BOY, GIRL, DUCK and DOCTOR. Grammatically, both *boy* and *boys* are nouns that enter into syntactic patterns in PS. Inflectionally, *boy* is a singular form of *boys* and, vice versa, *boys* is a plural form of *boy* and so both are forms of the other. Such a description is, however, circular. In making a circular non-linguistic description, on the analogy of *castles* and *forts*, we do not thereby deny nounhood to *boy* or *boys* in English simply because the latter has an optional-like suffix {s}. In addition, *boy* belongs to a singular inflectional class while *boys* belongs to a plural inflectional class within the English number system.

Sociolinguistically, the choices made by some language teachers are most intriguing. For example, Bantuists do not hesitate in describing *earl*, *earldom*, *countess*, etc. as nouns. They agree that each belongs to a

different class of nouns: concrete versus abstract, e.g. *count*, *countess* versus *earldom*, on the one hand, masculine versus feminine, e.g. *count* versus *countess*, on the other hand, etc. The same Bantu teacher however does not recognize words like *mji-ni*, *ki-jiwe*, etc. in Kiswahili as nouns. At the same time, the Bantu teacher confers nounhood on *boy* and on *boys* in English but not on Kiswahili nouns such as *mji* 'town' and *mjini* 'town, in town', *kiti* 'chair' and *kitini* 'in the chair', *jiko* 'stove' *majiko* 'stoves'. In my view, words with the same morphological structure ought to receive the same structural description cross-linguistically. The sociolinguistic attitude of Africanists underlines the influence of translational grammar on its practitioners. We observe how Africanists gladly accept *princedom* and *boys* as English nouns but deny words like *mjini* and *majiko* the status of nouns in an African language like Kiswahili, often because of their translations in I.-E. languages.

5. ARE THERE NOUNS OUTSIDE OF CLASS SYSTEMS IN BANTU LANGUAGES?

A slightly different version of the problems discussed in §§ 4.1.-4.2. is found in Maho (1999). Maho (1999: 97) states that "Kiswahili has lost the locative noun prefixes, at least they are not productively used in secondary classification. Instead locatives are formed with a suffix *-ni*. However, the concords of classes 16, 17 and 18 have been retained." Maho (1999) in effect agrees with Hurskainen (1994) and others that the suffix marker {ni} of locative words in Kiswahili is not a noun affix. For him, only prefixes can be noun affixes in Bantu (Maho 1999: 96, cited above). It follows that Kiswahili words like *mjini* 'in the town', *kitini* 'in the chair' are not nouns, and demonstrative proximates like *huu* and *humu* are not nominal words. We have demonstrated that this line of analysis is based on a selective application of morphological and syntactic rules to data. What we find surprising is Maho's implicit suggestion that his locative non-nouns, e.g. *kitini*, *mjini*, etc., somehow associate, rather than agree, with locative concords of classes 16-18 that have been retained in the grammar. Firstly, morphologically and syntactically, it is a surprise that a non-noun affix {ni} is able to generate or associate with agreement concords that are reserved only for nouns or their nominals as heads of NPs in class systems. Secondly, if we accept this line of argumentation, we will have to conclude that a) class

agreements in Bantu, especially Kiswahili, are arbitrary correspondences or associations entered into by words, some of which need not be nominals or dependent items of nominals, and b) class systems are, in fact, not necessary and sufficient systems for generating syntactic agreement patterns in Bantu. Thirdly, in Bantu, the locative marker {ni} or {ng'} occurs exclusively in nouns. For this reason, to say {ni} or {ng'} is not a noun marker, and it is also not a noun lexid or stem, seems to trivialize class descriptions in Bantu (Amidu 1997b). Fourthly, in Kiswahili and Bantu also, some linguists recognise a so-called double class marking system, called *preprefixation*. I do not recognize the type. Preprefixation, irrespective of its distribution as prefix1 + prefix2 + lexid, e.g. *ki+ji+we* > *kijiwe* 'pebble' or prefix1 + lexid + prefix2, e.g. *n+doo+ni* > *ndooni* 'in the bucket', further weakens Maho's description of the locative affix {ni} as a non-noun suffix in Kiswahili and Bantu. In the above structures, the term *prefix* is used generically, otherwise prefix2 is strictly speaking an infix or a suffix morphologically. Many Bantuists often fail to distinguish between the generic use of the term *prefix* and its non-generic uses and this affects their conclusions about classes in Bantu. Lastly, Maho could protest that his locative words with suffix {ni} are nouns. Even then, they would be nouns that are outside of the Bantu locative class system. If they were not outside the locative class system and the noun class system as a whole, the suffix {ni} that generates concords in strings would be, *a fortiori*, their class affix. But this is precisely what Maho rejects. It is difficult, therefore, to justify, theoretically, the existence of non-class nouns in any Bantu grammar (Amidu 1997b). For this reason, Maho's Kiswahili locative words with {ni} do not qualify as nouns in Bantu classes and so they cannot generate or take concords of classes 16-18 from outside the matrix frameworks of these classes. This problem is resolved when a linguist recognizes that in Bantu only nominals generate concordial agreements and all nominals, without exception, belong to noun gender or genetic classes.

6. CONCLUSION

Firstly, we have demonstrated that translational approaches to the analysis of L2 tend to give an unfavourable picture of the structure of L2 to the learner. It is true that a wordform may have a dual function both as

a noun and preposition or nominal predicate in a grammar. In such a situation, it may receive one or more distinct syntactic and morphological descriptions in the grammar to bring out its many functions (Amidu 1980). The selection between one or more types of descriptive structures should be based on language internal considerations and not simply on the translations into the l.o.d. (Amidu 1980, 1997b). Secondly, we have seen that the claim that Bantu nouns cannot be derived from other nouns by means of suffixes and prefixes has no linguistic validity. There is also no justification for the claim that nouns derived from nouns cannot form noun classes of their own in languages. As language teachers, we are bridge builders between L1 and L2. We should, therefore, highlight points of contrast and similarity between the languages we teach. Translational grammatical descriptions make these tasks all the more difficult and should, where possible, be avoided.

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