

The comparative analysis of morphemic and submorphemic neutralizations in Bantu pronominal paradigms (what they are for, and what they say about the language change).

Introduction and methodology

1. **Morphemic neutralization** is the case when as in Swahili object paradigm the pronouns of 2 and 3 pl -*wa-* coincide. Such cases are often treated as homonymy or syncretism [Cysouw 2003], but can be characterized (following [Pozdniakov 1993, 2003, 2009]) as morphemic neutralization. According to him it is the means for creating additional pronominal features. See also German *sie* for 3 SG.FEM, 3 PL and 2 PL.HONORIFIC and English *you* for 2 SG/PL. According to [Pozdniakov 2003] these neutralizations (homonymy) within paradigms are not occasional but very important to mark the oppositional (paradigmatic) relations between the signs and create additional semantics.

2. **Submorphemic neutralizations** were first introduced by Roman Jakobson [Jakobson 1985]. Further analysis for pronominal paradigms – see [Pozdniakov 2003, Zheltov 2005, 2008]. The cases of partial coincidence of neighboring elements in paradigms with common semantic component (eg. "locutor") as in French *moi-toi, nous-vous*; German *mich-dich, mir-dir*, Swahili *wako-wake* – 2SG.POSS/3 SG.POSS are considered. As it was quite well shown in [Pozdniakov 1993, 2003, 2009, 2010] besides morphemic neutralizations the submorphemic ones are of great importance. According to his ideas they are used for "gluing" together the elements of a paradigm with common component of meaning in the same way as morphemic neutralization, but it is more convenient for the language for it keeps the distinction of them at the same time. He points out 3 important generalizations about this phenomenon: 1) both morphemic and submorphemic neutralizations can be observed in some paradigms, while others keep the distinction of forms; 2) morphemic and submorphemic neutralizations are in additional distribution to each others; 3) more marked element of a paradigm tends to have more potential to neutralize other semantic features. Among other functions, it is widely used for marking together the speech act participants. It seems that tonal differences in pronominal system can be treated in the similar way. Tonal patterns can be used both for differing segmentally identical elements turning morphemic neutralization into submorphemic and connecting segmentally different elements with the common semantics marked by common tone.

3. **Bantu pronominal systems** have not yet been analyzed within this theoretical framework. This presentation deals with comparative analysis of the distribution of morphemic and submorphemic neutralizations in pronominal paradigms of the Bantu languages from different zones and Proto-Bantu reconstruction. In the tables morphemic neutralizations are marked with dark blue, submorphemic ones - with light blue. 1/2 person neutralization is marked by red, 2/3 person neutralization – by rose, sg/pl neutralization – by blue, cascade 1/2/3 neutralization – by green. The data are from [Segeer 2002-1016, Nurse, Philippson 2003]. The languages are distributed in 3 groups: North-West (Cross River, zones A, C, D), East (zones G, J, P), South and South-West (zones K, R, S).

Morphemic and submorphemic neutralizations in Proto-Bantu, Cross River and zones A, C, D

Proto-Bantu		Ibibio-Cross River		Basaa (A 43)		Kele (C 55)		Lengola (D 12)	
Subject		Subject		Subject		Subject		Subject	
sg	pl	sg	pl	sg	pl	sg	pl	singulier	pluriel
1 * <i>n</i> * <i>n</i> ?	* <i>tu</i>	1 <i>m-</i>	<i>i-</i> <i>i-</i>	1 <i>me</i>	<i>di</i>	1 <i>ne-</i>	<i>to-</i>	1 <i>e-</i>	<i>tu-</i>
2 * <i>u</i>	* <i>mu</i>	2 <i>ù-</i>	<i>i-</i> <i>ò-</i> <i>é-</i>	2 <i>u</i>	<i>ni</i>	2 <i>o-</i>	<i>bo-</i>	2 <i>a-</i>	<i>nu-</i>
3 * <i>u</i> * <i>a</i>	* <i>ba</i>	3 <i>i-</i>	<i>i-</i> <i>i-</i>	3 <i>a</i>	<i>bá</i>	3 <i>a-</i>	<i>ba-</i>	3 \emptyset , <i>a</i>	<i>ba-</i>
Object		Object		Object		Object		Object	
sg	pl	sg	pl	sg	pl	sg	pl	sg	pl
1 * <i>n</i>	* <i>tu</i>	1 <i>m-</i>	<i>ñnìn</i> <i>mièn</i> <i>i-</i>	1 <i>me</i>	<i>beš</i>	1 <i>-i-</i>	<i>-to-</i>	1 <i>-i-</i>	<i>-tú-</i>
2 * <i>ku</i>	* <i>mu</i>	2 <i>fièn</i>	<i>i-</i> <i>ù-</i> <i>ndùfò</i>	2 <i>wé</i>	<i>bee</i>	2 <i>-o-</i>	<i>-o-</i>	2 <i>-né-</i>	<i>-né- ... núe</i>
3 * <i>mu</i>	* <i>ba</i>	3 <i>àné</i>	<i>òmǝ</i> <i>è-</i> <i>è-</i>	3 <i>nyé</i>	<i>bó</i>	3 <i>-m-</i>	<i>-b-</i>	3 <i>-N-</i>	<i>-bá-</i>
Tonique		Tonique		Tonique		Tonique		Tonique	
sg	pl	sg	pl	sg	pl	sg	pl	sg	pl
1 * <i>i-n-ε</i>	* <i>i-có-ε</i>	1 <i>ami</i>	<i>ñnìn</i>	1 <i>mén</i>	<i>bes bôn</i>	1 <i>eme</i>	<i>esú</i>	1 <i>emi</i>	<i>júe</i>
2 * <i>u-ε</i> ?	* <i>i-ñó-ε</i>	2 <i>áfò</i>	<i>ndùfò</i>	2 <i>wéñ</i>	<i>bee bôn</i>	2 <i>ɔhe</i>	<i>enú</i>	2 <i>owe</i>	<i>núe</i>
3 * <i>u-i</i>	* <i>bá-ɔ</i>	3 <i>èné</i>	<i>òmǝ</i>	3 <i>nyén</i>	<i>bôn</i>	3 <i>hé</i>	<i>bó</i>	3 <i>ijé</i>	<i>ibó</i>

Morphemic and submorphemic neutralizations in Proto-Bantu and zones G, J, P (East)

	Proto-Bantu		Swahili (G 42)		Kinyarwanda (J 61)		Makonde (P 23)	
	Sg	Pl	Sg	Pl	Sg	Pl	Sg	Pl
Subject								
1	* <i>n</i> , <i>n</i> ?	* <i>tu</i>	<i>ni</i>	<i>tu</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>tu</i>	<i>ni</i> <i>ngu</i>	<i>tu</i>
2	* <i>u</i>	* <i>mu</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>m(u)</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>mu</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>mu</i>
3	* <i>u</i> * <i>a</i>	* <i>ba</i>	<i>yu</i> <i>a</i>	<i>wa</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>ba</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>va</i>
Object								
1	* <i>n</i>	* <i>tu</i>	<i>ni</i>	<i>tu</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>tu</i>	<i>ngu</i>	<i>tu</i>
2	* <i>ku</i>	* <i>mu</i>	<i>ku</i>	<i>wa</i>	<i>ku</i>	<i>ba</i>	<i>ku</i>	<i>mu</i>
3	* <i>mu</i>	* <i>ba</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>wa</i>	<i>mu</i>	<i>ba</i>	<i>mu</i>	<i>wa</i>

Morphemic and submorphemic neutralizations in Proto-Bantu and zones K, R, S (South, South-West)

	Proto-Bantu		Umbundu (R11)		Herero (R31)		Luvale (K14)		Mbukushu (K43)		Tswana (S 31)	
	Sg	Pl	Sg	Pl	Sg	Pl	Sg	Pl	Sg	Pl	Sg	Pl
Subject												
1	* <i>n</i> , <i>n</i> ?	* <i>tu</i>	<i>ndi/n</i>	<i>tù</i>	<i>mbi</i>	<i>tù</i>	<i>ngu</i>	<i>tu</i>	<i>ni</i>	<i>tu</i>	<i>ke</i> <i>n</i>	<i>re</i>
2	* <i>u</i>	* <i>mu</i>	<i>ò</i>	(<i>v</i>) <i>ù</i>	<i>ù</i>	<i>mù</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>mu</i>	<i>ghu</i>	<i>mu</i>	<i>ò</i>	<i>lo</i>
3	* <i>u</i> * <i>a</i>	* <i>ba</i>	<i>ò</i>	<i>va</i>	<i>ú</i>	<i>vé</i>	<i>u</i> <i>a</i>	<i>va</i>	<i>gha</i>	<i>ha</i>	<i>ò</i>	<i>ba</i>
Object											Tonique	
1	* <i>n</i>	* <i>tu</i>	<i>ndi/n</i>	<i>tù</i>	<i>ndji</i>	<i>tu</i>	<i>ngu</i>	<i>tu</i>	<i>ni</i>	<i>tu</i>	<i>n-na</i>	<i>ro-na</i>
2	* <i>ku</i>	* <i>mu</i>	<i>ku</i>	<i>ku</i>	<i>ku</i>	<i>mu</i>	<i>ku</i>	<i>mi</i>	<i>ku</i>	<i>mu</i>	<i>wé-na</i>	<i>lo-na</i>
3	* <i>mu</i>	* <i>ba</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>và</i>	<i>ku</i>	<i>ve</i>	<i>mu</i>	<i>va</i>	<i>mu</i>	<i>va</i>	<i>é-na</i>	<i>bô-na</i>

Conclusions

- 1) Morphemic and submorphemic neutralizations are often in additional distribution, the more morphemic neutralizations in the paradigm, the less submorphemic ones.
- 2) The neutralizations are not "occasional", but rather systematic.
- 3) It often happens to be important for paradigms to keep the structure of oppositions and neutralizations rather than forms.
- 4) All the neutralizations (1/2, 2/3, sg/pl) take place in all the languages despite the difference in forms. Sometimes 1/2 and 2/3 neutralizations are realized in cascade form (Basaa). It shows that these neutralizations are crucially important to "glue" pronominal paradigms.
- 5) 1 sg tends to be in opposition to other pronouns and very seldom participates in neutralizations.
- 6) 3 person is "responsible" for sg/pl neutralization, plural – for 1/2 neutralization, 2/3 is distributed in both sg and pl. 1/2 neutralization tends to be submorphemic, while other types of neutralizations can be both morphemic and submorphemic.
- 7) if some "stable" neutralization (eg. 2 SG/PL.OBJ - in all the languages of K, R, S zones except Luvale) is lost via innovation (2 PL.OBJ *mi* instead of common *mu* in Luvale) another neutralization appears to keep the important formal link between sg and pl. (1 SG/PL *ngu- tu*) - innovative 1 SG.OBJ *ngu* instead of *ni* keeps it actual in Luvale.

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