

The Problem of Entity Denoting Nouns in the Kiswahili Locative Class*

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Assibi A. Amidu. 2004. The Problem of Entity Denoting Nouns in the Kiswahili Locative Class. *The Linguistic Association of Korea Journal*, 12 (3), 1-21. Traditional and modern Kiswahili descriptions assume that the locative class or classes of the language do not contain inherent nouns, except for one or two or three words. Bantuists justify their claims from the mere fact that most locative nouns have lexids, i.e. stems, derived from lexical items in other classes. In addition, the lexids take a locative suffix {ni} as a class marker. This study examines data that show that locative words that bear the affix {ni} may be synonymous with words that have other affixes. We also demonstrate that locative words with {ni} distinguish between locational properties of objects and the entity of objects, and so, the class contains the same kinds of nouns that are found in other classes of the grammar.

Key words: Kiswahili, gender, location, entity, synonymy, polysemy

1. Introduction

This study will examine the following issues: 1. Some Traditional Views about Locative Classes in Bantu; 2. Locative and Entity Denoting Nouns in the Kiswahili Locative Class 17/26 NI3; 3. Place Names as Locational and Physical Objects; and 4. Conclusion. In summary, the study draws attention to the fact that locative nouns in Kiswahili may be entity denoting items or locative denoting items of their class or

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classes. In my conclusion, I take the position, directly or indirectly, that, in Kiswahili, the locative classes are not adverbial classes. I argue that the lexical status of locative nouns is not affected by the debate as to whether or not the locative classes are derived rather than simple classes. Consequently, the distinction real or inherent nouns versus derived nouns or forms of noun with a clitic stuck at the end of them is not useful in word derivation and syntactic theories (Amidu, 2004). The question as to whether to be locative necessarily also implies to be an oblique element of structure is not relevant or significant for Kiswahili Bantu.

2. Some Traditional Views about Locative Classes in Bantu

Kiswahili Bantu and other Bantu languages are built around a genetic class system often described as a gender system in several works. A few of the works that deal with Bantu classes are Steere (1870), Sacleux (1909), Ashton (1947), Amidu (1980, 1997, 2002), Heine (1982), Corbett (1991), Maho (1999), Demuth (2000) and Aikhenvald (2000). Among the classes of Bantu, 1 to 3 in particular are called locative classes and are numbered as classes 16-18 with class affixes PA, KU and MU. In his classifications, Maho (1999) argues for a locative class 23. I shall not take into account Maho's class 23 since it does not occur in Kiswahili Bantu. Consider the following traditional-like description of the data below.

- (1) *Bahari-ni pa-na samaki w-engi.*

Ocean-LOC Cl. 16 SM-COP-be with Cl. 10/2-fish Cl. 2-many
'In the ocean there are many fishes, lit. in the ocean has/is with many fishes'.

- (2) *Bahari-ni ku-na samaki w-engi.*

Ocean-LOC Cl. 17 SM-COP-be with Cl. 10/2-fish Cl. 2-many
'In the ocean there are many fishes, lit. in the ocean has/is with

many fishes’.

(3) *Bahari-ni m-na samaki w-engi.*

Ocean-LOC Cl. 18 SM-COP-be with Cl. 10/2-fish Cl. 2-many

‘In the ocean there are many fishes, lit. in the ocean has/is with many fishes’.

(1)-(3) have the same NP *baharini* ‘in the ocean’ as the subject argument of the VPs *pana samaki wengi*, *kuna samaki wengi* and *mna samaki wengi*. The predicate verb of the constructions is the copula NA ‘be with, have’. NA is a concord requiring predicate verb if it is the only predicate of its subject NP in the predication-sentence (Pn-S). We expect therefore that NA ‘be with, have’ will receive agreement concords from its subject NPs. In (1), the PC is *pana* with SM {pa}. The PC in (2) is *kuna* and it has the SM {ku}. Finally, PC *mna* in (3) has the SM {m}. For the same subject NP *baharini*, therefore, we have three subject markers, namely {pa}, {ku} and {mu} in the grammar¹⁾. The vocalic [u] of {mu} is realized as zero before a following consonant segment, hence [mu] > [m]. This gives us the PC *mna* in (3). The object NP of the VP is *samaki wengi* ‘many fishes’ in (1)-(3). Fishes live in water. They do not live by or near or far from a body of water. The semantic interpretation of (1)-(3) is, therefore, exactly the same whether the form of the concord in the PC is {pa} or {ku} or {mu}. Linguists would often conclude that the concord affixes {pa}, {ku} and {mu} in (1)-(3) function as allomorphs of the same underlying class morpheme. Given the invariable-like form of the subject NP, one would also naturally conclude that the allomorphy of the forms suggests that only a single class classification is economical for the marker {ni} and its agreement concords {pa}, {ku} and {mu} in Kiswahili. This is because, in order for *baharini* to generate the allomorphic concords, it must itself be a member of the same morphological class system containing its allomorphic markers (Amidu, 2004). In reality, Bantu grammarians treat {pa}, {ku} and {mu} as *distinct* affixes and use them

1) The words below were taken from four dictionaries, namely Sacleux (1939), Johnson (1939), TUKI (1981) and Issak (1999).

to classify Kiswahili Bantu locative words into three locative gender classes. As a result, the learner cannot distinguish between contexts of allomorphy and contexts of discrete function. This problem is most acute when the same word or phrase is the subject or object NP in more than one Pn-S, as in (1)-(3). At the same time, observe that no class description is assigned to *baharini* in (1)-(3) or in Kiswahili grammars. The learner is simply told that words like *baharini* are nouns in the locative case, or locative forms of nouns, or locatives derived from other nouns plus the addition of a suffix {ni}, and so on (Ashton, 1947, Hurskainen, 1994, Maho, 1999, Maw, 1999, McGrath and Marten, 2003, Amidu, 2004). The result is that words such as *baharini* have become the only words in Bantu classes that have no morphological noun class. As stated in Amidu (2004), it is little comfort for a word like *baharini* to be told that it is not a noun by any definition of the class system of Bantu. It is also little comfort to be told that it is a noun of sorts purely by its accidental association with concords of a noun class. Wherein the analyst knows that words with suffix {ni} are sorts of noun in Bantu and Kiswahili remains a mystery of Bantu linguistic theory.

There are other problems associated with the traditional descriptions of locative classes in Kiswahili and Bantu. Consider for example (4)-(6).

(4) *M-vuvi a-na samaki w-engi.*

Cl. 1-fisherman Cl. 1 SM-COP-be with Cl. 10/2-fish Cl. 2-many
 'The fisherman has many fishes, lit. the fisherman is with many fishes'.

(5) *M-vuvi yu-na samaki w-engi.*

Cl. 1-fisherman Cl. 1 SM-COP-be with Cl. 10/2-fish Cl. 2-many
 'The fisherman has many fishes, lit. the fisherman is with many fishes'.

(6) *M-vuvi u-na samaki w-engi.*

Cl. 1-fisherman Cl. 1 SM-COP-be with Cl. 10/2-fish Cl. 2-many
 'The fisherman has many fishes, lit. the fisherman is with many fishes'.

Any Kiswahilist or Bantuist or linguist who has been to the Kenya Kiswahili coast will be familiar with the constructions (Amidu, 1990, for examples). (4)-(6) have the same NP *mvuvi* 'fisherman' as the subject argument of the VPs *ana samaki wengi*, *yuna samaki wengi* and *una samaki wengi*. Observe that *mvuvi* is described as a noun of class 1 MU1, the so-called animate class of general Bantu studies. The predicate verb of the construction is also the copula NA 'be with, have'. In (4), the PC is *ana* with SM {a}. The PC in (5) is *yuna* and it has the SM {yu}. Lastly, PC *una* in (6) has the SM {u}. Observe how the same subject NP *mvuvi* generates three subject markers, namely {a}, {yu} and {u} in the data. The object NP of the VPs in (4)-(6) is also *samaki wengi* 'many fishes'. Observe further that the semantic interpretation of (4)-(6) is exactly the same whatever the choice of concord in the PC. Here again, it appears that the concord affixes {a}, {yu} and {u} function as allomorphs of the same underlying class morpheme. This is supported by the fact that *mvuvi* refers to the same referent. The vocalic [u] of *una* in (6) derives from the loss of the glide [y] in the affix {yu} in (5). For this reason, the PCs *yuna* and *una* are alloforms of the same predicate verb. The allomorphy of {a}, {yu} and {u} suggests that a single class classification underlies patterns of animate words like *mvuvi* in (4)-(6), hence the class 1 MU1 of Bantu.

When we compare (4)-(6) with (1)-(3), we find the parallelisms so striking that it seems difficult to fathom how {pa}, {ku} and {mu} of Kiswahili describe three gender classes while {a}, {yu} and {u} do not. In addition, it seems strange that scholars cannot agree that, in Kiswahili, {pa}, {ku} and {mu} are not *distinct* affixes but allomorphs of one single class on the analogy of (4)-(6). Amidu (1980) proposed four locative classes for Kiswahili, namely NI3 plus PA, KU and MU. However, because of allomorphy, the classes have since been reduced to a single class 17/26, with class affix NI3 (Amidu, 1997, 2002). The concord affixes of the class remain {pa}, {ku} and {mu}. We follow Amidu's classification in this study.

Traditional descriptions of classes in Bantu have always associated locatives with adverbial functions. As a result, there has been a long

running debate as to whether locative classes are truly noun classes with concord systems or not (Hurskainen, 1994, Maho, 1999, Amidu, 2004). The debate even overshadows the internal evidence about systematic patterning in the classes (Doke, 1943, Amidu, 1980, 1997, 2001, 2002, 2004). (1)-(6) suggest, however, that the syntactic and morphological status of *baharini* and *mvuvi* are exactly the same in the grammar. Both generate agreement concords in syntax and satisfy all the criteria for being nouns in Bantu. To put an end to this debate, let us look at the status of the locative in Kiswahili grammar in terms of contrastive functions in which its words partake.

3. Locative versus Entity denoting Nouns in the Kiswahili Locative Class 17/26 NI3

Contrary to traditional Bantu theories, Kiswahili locative words can describe concrete objects or entities or the spatio-temporal properties of concrete objects or entities. Locatives may also describe other kinds of entity including possible objects. Below is a list of examples. I place emphasis on cases involving choice of function, namely the polysemy of a word and also synonymy with words in other classes.

3.1. The polysemy of locative nouns in Kiswahili

Examples of locative words with both locational denoting and/or entity denoting subsenses in Kiswahili are as follows²⁾.

Lexeme	Locative subsense	Entity subsense
(7) FORODHANI	at/in the custom	house custom house, Customs House
(8) PEPONI	in heaven	Paradise, Heaven

²⁾ The words below were taken from four dictionaries, namely Sacleux (1939), Johnson (1939), TUKI (1981) and Issak (1999).

(9) MBINGUNI	in the skies	Paradise, Heaven
(10) MOTONI	in fire	Hell
(11) NYUMBANI	in the house, at home	home, a home
(12) KUZIMUNI	in the ancestral world	the ancestral world
(13) JIONI	in the evening	evening
(14) CHINJONI	at/in the slaughter house	abattoir, slaughter house
(15) MACHINJONI	at/in place for slaughter	abattoir, slaughter house; sharp edge of knife, cutting edge
(16) MAFUTUNI	on/at the back of a knife	back of a knife
(17) PWANI	on/at the coast	coast
(18) MADOBINI	at the laundry	laundry
(19) MACHUNGANI	on the grazing field	pasturage, grazing ground/s
(20) MALISHONI	on the grazing ground	pasturage, grazing ground/s
(21) MANYUNINI	lit. on/about birds	aviarium
(22) MBELENI	in the front	future, days ahead
(23) MWAKANI	lit. in the new year	next year
(24) MAGUNYANI	in Gunya country	Gunya country or territory
(25) MGAHAWANI	in the coffee house	coffee house, café
(26) MLEOLEONI	at the edge or precipice	edge, precipice
(27) MASAINI	in Masai country	Masai country or territory
(28) MVUNGUNI	in the space in a thing	space or recess in a thing
(29) MWEZINI	in the month	menses
(30) KASKAZINI	in/to/ from the north	North
(31) KUSINI	in/to/ from the south	South
(32) BAFUNI	in the bathroom	bathroom

The data above confirm that the Kiswahili locative class 17/26 NI3 contains nouns that describe not only locational properties of entities or objects in space-time but also concrete objects or entities in space-time.

3.2. The problem of class reanalysis with reference to locative nouns

Sometimes, in Bantu, the choice of a subsense triggers a reanalysis of

a wordform as a member of another genetic (or gender) class with or without all its subsenses. The process may or may not lead to a lexical split of the wordform (Amidu, 1997)³. We illustrate some of these patterns and choices below.

*(33) *M-*geni a-li-fik-a jio-ni mw-a jana**⁴.

Cl. 1-guest Cl. 1 SM-PAST-arrive-MOD evening-Cl. 17/26 Cl. 17/26-of Cl. 9-yesterday

i. 'The guest arrived in the evening of yesterday'.

ii. 'The guest arrived the evening of yesterday'.

(34) *M-*geni a-li-fik-a jioni y-a jana**.

Cl. 1-guest Cl. 1 SM-PAST-arrive-MOD Cl. 9-evening Cl. 9-of Cl. 9-yesterday

i. 'The guest arrived the evening of yesterday'.

ii. 'The guest arrived in the evening of yesterday'.

Sh. Abdulaziz Y. Lodhi of Uppsala University, a native speaker of Kiswahili, prefers (34) to (33). According to him, (33) occurs today mostly in poetic usage, and even then it has a special meaning that refers to the early part of the night. As he says (p.c.),

maana yake itakuwa mapema usiku, baada tu ya magharibi mpaka wakati wa Isha kabla ya saa za kwenda kulala kiasi cha saa tatu au nne

'it will mean early in the night, immediately after sunset and up to about the time of the last prayer (around 7.30 p.m.) but before bed time around 9 or 10 p.m.'

3) Reanalysis or change of class by a lexical item is called the *Lexical Movement Hypothesis* (Amidu, 1997, pp. 40-41, p. 66, p. 90, p. 95, pp. 103-103, pp. 146-151). Reanalysis may involve a simple split of a wordform called lexical split that forces us to recognize two lexical words instead of one, e.g. *baharini*¹ versus *baharini*² in the grammar. The split of a wordform does not change its meaning or syntactic category class.

4) Examples with the dagger symbol are seldom heard in Modern Kiswahili today. Even so, they are of historical interest to a linguist and can be found in a few poetic texts.

Sh. Lodhi's distinction is not recorded in Johnson (1939) or Sacleux (1939) or other dictionaries, and so it reveals a usage not recorded before. (33)-(34) describe the same event that occurs at the same period of time. *Jioni* in both (33) and (34) is polysemic. It denotes either location in time or just the time of the event in the Pn-S. Time is a second order entity and nominal (Lyons, 1968). (33)-(34) also reveal that the speaker has a choice of classes for expressing the same communication intention, namely class 17/26 NI3 or class 9 NI1. For this reason, (34) is just as ambiguous as (33) in spite of the change in morphological class (Amidu, 2004). The feature of lexical split and lexical movement without change of form can be seen in the data above. Observe how the morpholexeme JIONI becomes *jioni*₁ versus *jioni*₂ because of the reanalysis of the class of the original locative word (Amidu, 1997).

* (35) *Pwa-ni mw-a Afrika y-a Mashariki m-na-kabili Bahari y-a Hindi.*

Coast-Cl. 17/26 Cl. 17/26-of Cl. 9-Afrika Cl. 9-of Cl. 9-east Cl. 17/26 SM-RECENT PAST-face-MOD Cl. 9-ocean Cl. 9-of Cl. 9-India

'The coast of East Afrika faces the Indian Ocean'.

(36) *Pwani y-a Afrika y-a Mashariki i-na-kabili Bahari y-a Hindi.*

Cl. 9-coast Cl. 9-of Cl. 9-Afrika Cl. 9-of Cl. 9-east Cl. 9 SM-RECENT PAST-face-MOD Cl. 9-ocean Cl. 9-of Cl. 9-India

'The coast of East Afrika faces the Indian Ocean'.

(35)-(36) are like (33)-(34). That is to say, *pwani* is a polysemous noun in Kiswahili. It may denote location in a place-object or just the place-object of the event implied in the Pn-S. However, observe that, in (35)-(36), the subject NP *pwani* is an entity denoting word rather than a locative denoting word. *Pwani* may, therefore, be described as a noun of the locative class 17/26 NI3 or a noun of class 9 NI1, although, according to Sh. Lodhi, the former class pattern is no longer used today. The morpholexeme PWANI becomes, therefore, **pwani*₁ versus

*pwani*². The evidence reveals that the polysemic meaning of *pwani* does not change because of its reclassification into class 9 NI1. In contrast to (33)-(36), the following data are both grammatical and acceptable in Kiswahili today.

(37) *Kusi-ni mw-a n-chi m-me-ny-esh-a m-vua ny-ingi.*

South-Cl. 17/26 Cl. 17/26-of Cl. 9-country Cl. 17/26
SM-RECENT PAST-rain-CAUS-MOD Cl. 10-rain Cl. 10-much
'In the south of the country much rain fell'.

(38) *Kusini y-a n-chi i-me-ny-esh-a m-vua ny-ingi.*

Cl. 9-south Cl. 9-of Cl. 9-country Cl. 9 SM-RECENT
PAST-rain-CAUS-MOD Cl. 10-rain Cl. 10-much
'In the south of the country much rain fell'.

Sh. Abdulaziz Y. Lodhi verified the data. (37)-(38) derive from entailment operations. The change from (37) to (38) does not change meaning, but it results in a lexical split of the morpholexeme KUSINI into *kusini*¹ and *kusini*². (37)-(38) reveal that, unlike (33)-(36), speakers can still make choices of usage simply by selecting the locative class form *kusini*¹ or the non-locative class form *kusini*². Nouns that pattern like *kusini* include *kaskazini* in (30) and *pembeni* 'in/to/from/at the corner' or 'the corner'.

From (33)-(38), we can assert that all classes in the class system are classes of noun without exception. Thus, to be a noun in Bantu, it suffices that a lexical item be subject to the class projection principle (CPP) and the nominal category nodes of the syntactic hierarchy principle (SHP) of Bantu (Amidu, 1980, 1997, 2001, 2004).

3.3. Lexical duplication and synonymy across class boundaries

In (33)-(38), we saw that reanalysis results in the transfer of all subsenses of a word into another class along with its wordform. The outcome retains polysemy and there is often a choice between the new

class and the erstwhile class of the word. Sometimes, however, a reanalysis of a subsense in the locative class leads to a change of class that excludes locative subsenses. Lexical split and duplication of lexical form occur in these cases too (Amidu, 1997). Consider *machinjioni* in (15). It forms the following Pn-Ss.

(39) *Machinjio-ni mw-a u-panga m-na-pat-a sana.*

Cutting edge-Cl. 17/26 Cl. 17/26-of Cl. 11-sword Cl. 17/26
SM-PRESENT-get-MOD Cl. 0-very

'The cutting edge of a sword is very sharp'.

(40) *Ma-chinjioni y-a u-panga ya-na-pat-a sana.*

Cl. 6-cutting edge Cl. 6-of Cl. 11-sword Cl. 6
SM-PRESENT-get-MOD Cl. 0-very

'The cutting edge of a sword is very sharp'.

Sh. Abdulaziz Y. Lodhi verified the data. We found the word *machinjioni* in all the dictionaries we consulted. The dictionaries, except one, have just one entry, as in (39), followed by its subsenses. The subsenses are either locative denoting or entity denoting. The subsenses make the word polysemic in many ways. Issak (1999), however, has two entries for this word. This leads to the choice (39) or (40) in the grammar. Issak (1999), a native speaker of Kiswahili, treats the entity denoting subsense 'slaughter house, abattoir' as belonging in the locative class 17/26 NI3 along with the historical locative denoting subsense 'in/to/from the abattoir'. This is because some speakers associate 'abattoir, slaughter house' with a place or location used for slaughtering animals. Issak (1999), however, associates the entity denoting subsense 'sharp edge of a knife' with a cutting instrument. The synonym for the subsense 'sharp edge of a knife' in Kiswahili is *makali* of class 6 MA1, as in (41).

(41) *Ma-kali y-a u-panga ya-na-pat-a sana.*

Cl. 6-cutting edge Cl. 6-of Cl. 11-sword Cl. 6
SM-PRESENT-get-MOD Cl. 0-very

'The cutting edge of a sword is very sharp'.

It appears from Issak (1999) that some speakers, using a specific subsense, have reanalysed and reclassified *machinjioni* as a word in class 6 MA1 today. The shift is recent and appears to be based on analogy. The locative form is consequently duplicated, and this gives us *machinjioni*¹ versus *machinjioni*². Sh. Lodhi insists that (39) is still a valid construction in Kiswahili. The evidence reveals that locative nouns do degrammaticalize and convert from their original class into other classes of noun. The analogical shifts above are significant for linguistic theory. They tell us that if we accept one classification of a word as a noun, then scientific consistency and motivation requires us to accept its identical synonym as a noun. Analogical shifts are self-evident proofs against the claims of Bantu traditional grammars. This means, there is no sound lexical and syntactic basis in Bantu for the claim that locative nouns are not inherent nouns or are only nouns in a locative case, or are just forms of nouns but not real nouns, or are merely oblique or adverbial nouns.

3.4. Lexical form differentiation and synonymy across class boundaries

The choice between *machinjioni*, (39), on the one hand, and *makali*, (41), on the other hand, is an example of lexical form differentiation across class boundaries in Kiswahili Bantu. (40)-(41) are cases of differentiation within the same class. The choices do not change meaning. Another example of the type of choice in (39)-(41) is as follows:

(42) *Mvungu-ni mw-a meza m-me-ja-a takataka.*

Cavity-Cl. 17/26 Cl. 17/26-of Cl. 9-table Cl. 17/26 SM-RECENT
PAST-be full-MOD Cl. 10-rubbish

- i. The space under the table is full of rubbish.
- ii. Under the table is full of rubbish.

(43) *M-vungu w-a meza u-me-ja-a takataka.*

Cl. 3-cavity Cl. 3-of Cl. 9-table Cl. 3 SM-RECENT PAST-be
full-MOD Cl. 10-rubbish

- i. The space under the table is full of rubbish.
- ii. Under the table is full of rubbish.

(42)-(43) have been constructed from entries taken from Sacleux (1939). Observe that *mvunguni* (42) is derived as a word after the conversion of *mvungu* (43) into a lexicid {mvungu}. This is followed by the nominization of the lexicid before the locative class marker NI3 (Amidu, 1997). Even so, (42) and (43) show that a speaker may use the non-locative *mvungu* of class 3 MU2 or use the locative *mvunguni* of class 17/26 NI3 to express the same entity denoting meaning, namely 'cavity/recess/hollow/space (under an object)'. Moreover, both nouns have the same syntactic function and category status in the data. Significantly, the choice available to the speaker makes it untenable to claim that, of the two class items, namely *mvunguni* and *mvungu*, the former is not really a noun but merely a noun of another class with a case marker stuck on it. For, if the lexical items do not belong in the same kind of grammatical form class, their synonymy would be inexplicable in linguistics and within the class system of Bantu. There are several choices like these in Kiswahili classes. For example, *mafutuni* 'back side of a knife', in (16), has a synonym *mafutu* 'back side of knife' in class 6 MA1. Additionally, the former is polysemic and may also mean 'at/on the back side of a knife'. Issak (1999) also records *bafu* 'bathroom, bath' versus *bafuni* 'bathroom' or 'in the bath'. The latter is polysemic. The following words could also pair as synonyms: *kuzimu* 'the ancestral world' versus *kuzimuni* 'in the ancestral world' or 'the ancestral world', *kushoto* 'the left hand side' versus *kushotoni* 'to/on the left hand side' or 'the left hand side' (Amidu, 1997).

4. Place Names as Locational and Physical Objects

When Kiswahilists and Bantuists describe the locative class or classes as an adverbial noun class or classes, they overlook the fact that the class (or classes) contains place nouns as locational objects or entities (Amidu, 1980). Locational objects can be controversial in themselves. Some of them are place names like *Tanzania*, *Kariokoo*, and common objects such as *mji* 'town', *kijiji* 'village', and so on. Amidu (1980) has called them entity denoting nouns if they generate concords of a non-locative class but locative denoting nouns if they generate concords of the locative class. In practice, these place nouns are able to generate both types of concord. Formally, Bantuists usually classify nouns such as *Tanzania*, *Kariokoo*, *mji*, *kijiji*, and so on as belonging to given morphological classes in the class system. Thus, *Tanzania* and *Kariokoo* are classified as members of class 9 NI1 while *mji* is classified as a member of class 3 MU2 and *kijiji* is classified as a member of class 7 KI in the class system. On the other hand, place nouns such as *Jambiani*, a village in the Southern Region of Unguja or Zanzibar, *Kilindini*, a town near Mombasa, and so on have the overt locative marker {ni} of class 17/26 NI3 in Kiswahili. The question naturally arises as to whether place names or nouns such as *Jambiani*, *Kilindini*, and so on, should be called locative denoting place nouns when their exact counterparts are classified in so-called entity denoting classes and are called entity denoting place nouns.

Following from § 2.1., it seems that the solution here is to say that words like *Jambiani*, *Kilindini*, and so on are locative class nouns that are entity denoting elements of structure at par with place names such as *Zanzibar* or *Unguja*, *Tanzania* and *Kariokoo*. This conclusion is both semantically and morphologically sound in Bantu since nouns in Bantu may move from one class into another⁵⁾. Thus, *Tanzania* generates a concord such as {i} of class 9 NI1 in PC but it can also generate a concord such as {pa} or {ku} or {mu} of class 17/26 NI3 in PC if it

5) See footnote 3 above.

changes class without change of form. *Unguja* generates a concord {u} of class 14 U2 but it can generate either concord {i} or {pa} or {ku} or {mu} of classes 9 NI1 or 17/26 NI3 in PC if it changes class without change of form. By the same analogy, *Jambiani* or *Kilindini* generates concord {pa} or {ku} or {mu} of class 17/26 NI3, but it can generate either concord {ki} or {u} or {i} of classes 7 KI, 3 MU2 and 9 NI1. Consider (44)-(53) below.

(44) *Kilindi-ni ku-na wa-tu w-engi.*

Kilindi-Cl. 17/26 Cl. 17/26 SM-COP-be with Cl. 2-person Cl. 2-many

'In *Kilindini* there are many people'.

(45) *Kilindi-ni ku-na wa-tu w-engi.*

Kilindi-Cl. 17/26 Cl. 17/26 SM-COP-be with Cl. 2-person Cl. 2-many

'*Kilindini* has many people'.

(46) *Kilindini u-na wa-tu w-engi.*

Cl. 3-Kilindini Cl. 3 SM-COP-be with Cl. 2-person Cl. 2-many
'*Kilindini* has many people'.

(47) *Kilindini i-na wa-tu w-engi.*

Cl. 9-Kilindini Cl. 9 SM-COP-be with Cl. 2-person Cl. 2-many
'*Kilindini* has many people'.

(44) and (45) have the same constituents and the same SM {ku} in PC, but two possible interpretations of the noun *Kilindini*. (44) describes locational properties of a place called *Kilindini* in which something occurs or is contained, while (45) describes an entity, namely the physical object called *Kilindini*. (46) has the subject NP *Kilindini* but the NP generates the SM {u} in PC. The SM {u} suggests clearly that *Kilindini* is a town and the generic term for town is *mji* of class 3 MU2 whose concord is {u} in PC. Concord {i} of class 9 NI1, as in (47), refers to the generic term *nchi* 'land, territory', but it may be used in the sense of (46). *Kilindini* in (46) or (47) has changed class and is an example of lexical movement from class 17/26 NI3 to another class.

When we compare (46)-(47) with (44)-(45), however, we discover that change of class matrix retains the entity denoting subsense from the locative class, and so, a morpholexeme KILINDINI is realized as *kilindini*₁, *kilindini*₂ and *kilindini*₃ across class boundaries. Consider (48)-(49).

(48) *M-falme w-etu a-me-fik-a Jambia-ni.*

Cl. 1-king Cl. 1 SM-COP 'A'-PossProCl. 2/1 our Cl. 1
SM-RECENT PAST-arrive-MOD Jambia-Cl. 17/26
'Our King has arrived in *Jambiani*'.

(49) *M-falme w-etu a-me-nunu-a Jambia-ni.*

Cl. 1-king Cl. 1 SM-COP 'A'-PossProCl. 2/1 our Cl. 1
SM-RECENT PAST-buy-MOD Jambia-Cl. 17/26
i. Our King has bought *Jambiani*, i.e. the village called *Jambiani*.
ii. Our King has bought properties or something in *Jambiani*.

(48) and (49) differ only slightly from (44)-(45). That is, (48)-(49) have the same constituents, but differ in the type of predicate verbs they have. (48) has the P-v *-fika* 'arrive' while (49) has the P-v *-nunua* 'buy'. The predicate verbs require different kinds of object NP. *Fika* 'arrive' often requires locative nouns as object NP but it may also take non-locative nouns as object NP. In (48), therefore, the king arrives at or into a location that bears the name *Jambiani*. *Jambiani* is a locative denoting noun in this context. In (49), *nunua* 'buy' requires an entity denoting object NP, plus or minus a locative object NP. *Jambiani* in (49) is, consequently, either an entity denoting NP on one reading or a locative denoting NP on a second reading. The king, therefore, either owns *Jambiani* or something in it. Observe that the class of *Jambiani* does not change from (48) to (49) and yet the subsenses, locative denoting noun versus entity denoting noun, are clearly distinguished in the Pn-Ss. Compare (48)-(49) with the choices in (50)-(53).

(50) *M-falme w-etu a-me-ku-nunu-a Jambia-ni.*

Cl. 1-king Cl. 1 SM-COP 'A'-PossProCl. 2/1 our Cl. 1

SM-RECENT PAST-Cl. 17/26 OM-buy-MOD Jambiani-Cl. 17/26

- i. Our King has bought *Jambiani*, i.e. the village called *Jambiani*.
- ii. Our King has bought properties or something in *Jambiani*.

(51) *M-falme w-etu a-me-ki-nunu-a Jambiani*.

Cl. 1-king Cl. 1 SM-COP 'A'-PossProCl. 2/1 our Cl. 1

SM-RECENT PAST-Cl. 7 OM-buy-MOD Cl. 7-Jambiani

'Our King has bought *Jambiani*, i.e. the village called *Jambiani*'.

(52) *M-falme w-etu a-me-u-nunu-a Jambiani*.

Cl. 1-king Cl. 1 SM-COP 'A'-PossProCl. 2/1 our Cl. 1

SM-RECENT PAST-Cl. 3 OM-buy-MOD Cl. 3-Jambiani

'Our King has bought *Jambiani*, i.e. the town/village called *Jambiani*'.

(53) *M-falme w-etu a-me-i-nunu-a Jambiani*.

Cl. 1-king Cl. 1 SM-COP 'A'-PossProCl. 2/1 our Cl. 1

SM-RECENT PAST-Cl. 9 OM-buy-MOD Cl. 9-Jambiani

'Our King has bought *Jambiani*, i.e. the village called *Jambiani*'.

Sh. Abdulaziz Y. Lodhi verified the data. In (50)-(53), the PC takes object concord {ku} of locative class 17/26 NI3 or {ki} of class 7 KI or {u} of class 3 MU2 or {i} of class 9 NII. Note that the object NP is *Jambiani* in each Pn-S and it is an entity denoting object in each case. The study, therefore, reveals a paradox of semantic assignment rules in Kiswahili, namely locative nouns take concords of other classes in the grammar. This semantic rule has never before been mentioned in any grammatical work or academic paper. Indeed, it cannot be stated without ringing the knell of existing semantic rules in Bantu.

5. Conclusion

We have argued that the morphological locative class 17/26 NI3 (or classes 16-18 of traditional grammars) is a class that contains different kinds of noun. We have also illustrated that sometimes a locative noun has synonyms in non-locative classes that show differentiation or

non-differentiation in lexical form. We have seen that a locative noun may be polysemic, describing either a locational property of an object or the object itself as a physical entity. Furthermore, we have demonstrated that traditional theories of Bantu classes are unable to explain systematically the synonymy or polysemy of lexical items across the boundaries of locative and non-locative classes. The time has, therefore, come for the traditional approach to locative classes in Kiswahili to be replaced by a new one.

Africanists and linguists could, perhaps, take a leaf from the methods of philosophy. For example, Ayer (1956, pp. 10-11) says,

Except where a word is patently ambiguous, it is natural for us to assume that the different situations, or types of situation, to which it applies have a distinctive common feature. For otherwise why should we use the same word to refer to them? Sometimes we have another way of describing such a common feature; we can say, for example, that what irascible people have in common is that they are all prone to anger. But very often we have no way of saying what is common to the things to which the same word applies except by using the word itself.

Ayer is referring to an old paradox proposed by Wittgenstein. As he says on p. 11, Wittgenstein held the view that "there is no such simple resemblance between the things that we call 'games'." He concludes that,

The point which Wittgenstein's argument brings out is that the resemblance between the things to which a word applies may be of different degrees. It is looser and less straightforward in some cases than in others. (Ayer, 1956, p. 12)

Kiswahili Bantu data confirm that all items to which the word 'noun' refers or applies have the same resemblance and a 'distinctive common feature'. Within a linguistic empirical grammar, therefore, it is not helpful to say some noun is not a noun because it resembles other nouns, wholly or partially, even if resemblance is 'less straightforward

in some cases than in others'. The important thing is that, syntactically and morphologically, all nouns are nouns that have the capacity to denote the same common kinds of object and to pattern in the same common kinds of phrase structure in the noun class system. To argue otherwise is to diminish the claims of linguistics itself to being a science.

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