1. INTRODUCTION

Swahili has three morphologically distinct relative verb constructions.

A. subject concord — verb stem — relative concord

B. subject concord — na PRES li PAST taka FUT si NEG — relative concord — verb stem

C. amba relative concord SENTENCE

(1) A. (wa-tu) wa-sema-o kiswahili (people) SC speak RC (those) who speak Swahili

B. (wa-tu) wa-na-o-sema kiswahili (those) who are speaking Swahili

C. (wa-tu) amba-o (ha-wa-ta-sema) kiswahili (those) who will not speak Swahili

2. INTERNAL RECONSTRUCTION

Construction B is historically derived from construction A. The clearest indication for this is the form of the Future Tense Marker -takà-, with stress on its final syllable. Since stress, in Swahili, regularly falls on the penultimate syllable, these verb forms are clearly marked as compounds with an (internal) word boundary after the Relative Concord. The first part of these compounds constitutes an A-type relative construction of the verb -taka « want » (The non-relative Future Tense Marker -ta- is, of course, derived from the same auxiliary, the syllable ka being lost in unstressed position).

A similar development is hypothesized for type B constructions with the Tense Markers -na-, -li-, and -si-. However, the symmetry is not complete. These three morphemes do not function as regular verbs in Swahili, and there is no reason to believe they did in pre-Swahili.
Rather, they occur each in its own peculiar set of copulative constructions, amongst which, notably, are type A forms:

(2a) wa-na-cho (kitabu) they have it (the book)
(2b) (kitabu) wa-li-cho na-cho (the book) which they have
(2c) (watu) wa-li-o na watoto (those) who have children
(2d) (watu) wa-si-o na watoto (those) who have no children

Note that the RC following na, as in (2a) and (2b), does not mark the clause as being relative; it simply is the proper morphological form of the bound anaphoric pronoun to be used in this environment, i.e. after na. The fact remains that na, li, and si all occur in the environment SC--RC, i.e. in type A constructions.

I suspect further that -na-, -li-, and -si- carry stress in the same way as -taká- when used in type B relative constructions. I have noted, that a frequent deviation from standard spelling is to make a break after the RC, e.g. wanao andika/wali-o andika/wasi-o andika « they who write/wrote/don’t write » / The same applies to Swahili written in Arabic script.

We may say, therefore, that all four type B constructions consist of a type A construction plus a verb stem (which may be preceded by an object concord). The verb stem, in turn, can be seen to be derived from an infinitive, of which the nominal prefix ku has been deleted when unstressed.

(3a) (wa-tu) wa-li-o-ya-nunüa (ma-tunda) (those) who bought them (the fruits) NP-people SC-PAST RC -OCbuy NP-fruits 2 2 6 6
(3b) (wa-tu) wa-li-o-ya-la (those) who ate them
(3c) (wa-tu) wa-li-o-ku-la ma-tunda (those) who ate fruits

The inference that type B relative constructions developed out of type A constructions is obvious.

The type C relative construction, too, is nothing but a special case of type A. The verb stem -amba is used in modern Swahili mainly in the infinitive kw-amba which functions as a complementizer, but the applicative verb -ambia « tell » is very common. This alone is enough to hypothesize an older verb -amba « say ». The « relative marker » ambä-RC is very likely to have developed out of the type A construction by loss of the subject concord. The paraphrase would have been « of which/ of whom one says... », « duquel on dit... ».1

3. COMPARATIVE RECONSTRUCTION

Internal reconstruction leads to the hypothesis that type A relative constructions are the oldest; it does not, as far as I can see, provide arguments bearing on the relative chronology of type B and type C. Still, type C is often assumed to be the most recent one, cf. Perrott (1951 : 64) : « Good Swahili got on for years without these forms, but they are likely to become more common as time goes on » (See also Givón 1972 : 191). Swahili written tradition should belong

1. An alternative hypothesis, proposed by Dammann (1966), derives ambä-RC from an imperative followed by the RC functioning as an anaphoric object pronoun. Such an imperative construction is, however, quite unknown in Swahili, in northeastern Bantu, and in Bantu in general.
enough to evaluate this claim. If we substitute « Zanzibar Swahili » for Perrott’s « good
Swahili », Steere (1906 : 121f) confirms that type C is « not used in Zanzibar ». Likewise, Sacleux
(1909a, b) does not treat type C in his two Swahili grammars, though the construction is
documented in his dictionary (1939). Outside Zanzibar, type C constructions probably have
existed for centuries, cf. Miehe’s (1979) study of the language of the older Swahili poetry. I would
like to interpret the more restricted geographical spread of type C within Swahili as an indication
of its more recent origin, as compared with type B constructions.

This is confirmed by comparison of Swahili with its closest relatives in northeastern Bantu.
According to Nsuka (1982 : 3lf.; map 2), the only Bantu languages employing type A and/or type
B relative constructions are all geographically and linguistically close to Swahili: Pokomo,
Nyika, Digo, Shambala, Bondei, Hehe (attestation doubtful). The fact that almost all these
languages employ both type A and type B constructions, whereas grammars make no mention
of type C, can again be taken as an indication of type B’s chronological priority over type C.

It would be interesting, but leading too far away from Swahili, to try and trace the
development of type A in a comparative Bantu perspective.

4. RESTRICTIONS ON TENSE MARKERS (TM)

Type B constructions occur with four different Tense Markers : -na- PRESENT, -li- PAST,
taka- FUTURE, and -si- NEGATIVE. The question is : why are there no relative tenses (type
B) with other Tense Markers, such as -a- AORIST, -ka- SUBSECUtIVE, -ki- SITUATIVE,
-nge-, -ngali CONDITIONAL, and -me- PERFECT. The answer is not the same in each case.

The TMs -a- and -ka- are very old; they have, in fact, been reconstructed for proto-Bantu.
At the time when type A constructions of the copular « verbids » and the future auxiliary verb
were compounded into type B constructions, -a- and -ka- had long since ceased to be auxiliaries.

The TM -ki- is only usable in subordinated clauses; a SITUATIVE clause is semantically
not capable of forming a relative clause on its own. One might even say that -ki- clauses are
syntactically embedded just like relative clauses. A similar explanation probably holds for the
CONDITIONAL clauses, though the TM’s -nge- and -ngali- are used in the conditional as well
as in the main clause.

(4a) ningekuwa na mali ningemwoa If I had money I would marry her

A relative embedding of this sentence is semantically possible, but no type B construction
exists. Type C, however, is acceptable.

(4b) msichana ambaye ningekuwa na mali ningemwoa The girl which...

Thus, there seems to be a restriction on Type A and B relatives that excludes such complex
sentences, just as relative subjunctives are excluded.

The non-occurrence of the TM -me- in type B constructions demands a different
explanation. Semantically, nothing inhibits perfective relative clauses, and -me- is a relatively

2. Some speakers would accept (or admit using) type B relatives with the TM -ngali- (but not -nge-); e.g. msichana
ningaliyemwoa ningalikuwa na mali « the girl which I would have married if I had had the money ». The reason for
this near-acceptability seems to be that -ngali- is a complex TM, and that the RC in such forms follows the formative -li-.
recent TM which developed from the verb -mala « finish » used as an auxiliary. Miehe (1979: 225-28) documents three paths along which this verb became an auxiliary:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic stem</th>
<th>Perfective stem with palatalization</th>
<th>Perfective stem with imbrication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(-mala)</td>
<td>-mazie-</td>
<td>-mele-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-maa-</td>
<td>-mezie-</td>
<td>-mee-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ma-</td>
<td>-meze-</td>
<td>-me-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All these forms are regular in the sense that they are attested for other verbs, too; compare -kazie and -kalie (no imbrication, with and without palatalization) from -kaa « sit », -pete from -pata « get », -yee from -yaa « be full », etc. It appears that in old (northern, poetic) Swahili type A relatives could freely be formed from basic as well as from perfective stems, and from these we would expect the development of type B relatives with the various PERFECT TMs. They do, in fact, occur, but with the notable exception of -me-o-. (The concordless morpheme -o-frequently replaces the RC in old/northern/poetic Swahili).

There is evidence that -me- is the most recent PERFECT TM in poetic Swahili, and that it spread from the south to the north (cf. Miehe 1979: 229-30). Possibly, the type B relative paradigm was complete at the time when -me- spread all over Swahili and pushed out other competing forms.

5. ACCESSIBILITY

All three constructions (A, B and C) can be employed to form subject and object relatives. In simple object relatives, the use of an object concord (OC) is (almost) obligatory.

(6) A. mw-aka u-ja-oh
     m-tu ni-y-pokea-ye
next year (« year which-comes »)
the man whom I receive

B. mw-aka u-ii-0-pita
     m-tu wa-li-yo-pokea
last year (« year which-passed »)
the man whom they received

C. k-ambu amba-cho ha-ki-ja-fika
     k-ambu amba-cho hu-ja-ki-soma
the book which has not yet arrived
the book which you didn't read yet

3. Object relatives of types A and B have the order (ANTECEDENT) VERB/REL SUBJECT when the subject is a noun. In type C, word order may be either (ANTECEDENT) amba- RC VERB SUBJECT or... SUBJECT VERB; the order VS deviates from the dominant SV(O) order of swahili. Givón (1972: 191-92) invokes the « principle of pronoun attraction » as an explanation. Dik (1980: 188-90) proposes another hypothesis: he believes that Bantu originally had PIVSO word order, where PI represents a special position for Topic or Focus. Accordingly the order in an object relative clauses could have been Relative Marker VS, and our patterns A and B explained by Dik as the results of an incorporation of RM into the verb. The fact that the Relative Marker (RC) occurs originally (type A) in postfinal position, i.e. after the verb, refutes Dik's hypothesis, at least as far as Swahili is concerned. An original SVO pattern plus Givón's « pronoun attraction » adequately account for the facts of word and morpheme order with which we are here concerned.
In all three constructions, the RC may also refer to an entity which is neither subject nor (direct) object of the relative clause. In these cases, naturally, the RC and the OC - if present - have different referents.

(7) A. *ny-imbo ni-mw-andikia-zo the songs *I write for him
    B. *ma-neno ni-li-yo-ku-amibia the words *I told you

Such syntactic constructions are particularly common with RCs of the « autonomous » classes 8 (vyo- MANNER) and 16 (-po- TIME/CONDITION).

(8) ni-li-vyo-ku-onyesha as I showed you
    wa-na-po-imba when/if they sing
    u-ja-po-mw-amibia hasikii even though you tell him, he does not listen

Relative clauses of all three types may also refer to arguments that are morphologically embedded within the relative clause. Such morphological embeddings are the Connective (« genitive »), the Instrumental phrase preceded by kwa-, and the Associative/Agentive phrase preceded by na-. In such constructions, we find a RC within the verb form as well as a kind of « resumptive pronoun » with the appropriate morphological marker.

(9a) ndiy.e ni-li-ye-ku-zungumzia habari za-ke it is *the stories I told you
(9b) ma-neno a-li-yo-wa-danganya wenziwe kwa-y,o the words with which *he deceived his companions
(9c) w-enziwe a-li-o-zungumza na-o her friends with whom *she talked

Locatives of classes 16, 17 and 18 (marked by a non-class specific suffix -ni) deserve special attention in this connection. The RC has to refer to the class of the head noun. Thus, examples (b) and (c) below are ungrammatical.

(10a) *nyumba-ni ni-na-mq-kaa in-the-house in which I live
(10b) nyumba ni-na-mq-kaa the house in which I live
(10c) *nyumba-ni wa-taka-yo-i-bomoa in-the-house which they are going to pull down

Sentences (b) and (c) are rectified by using analytic (often : connective) locative constructions.

(10b') nyumba ni-na-yo-kaa ndani ya-ke
(10c') ndani ya nyumba wa-taka-yo-i-bomoa
(10c'') katika nyumba wa-taka-yo-i-bomoa

Even greater syntactic accessibility is shown in the following example where a type B relative refers to the object of an embedded sentence. Note that the RC again appears within the main verb to which it has no direct syntactic relation.

(11) ny-imo n-wa-sikia wa-zee wa-o wa-ki-zi-imba
    the songs which I heard their elders sing (them)

In terms of frequency or stylistic preference, however, it is probably true that the more complex the syntactic structure of the relative clause and the function of the relativized argument in it, the more likely becomes the use of type C constructions. Thus, Ashton (1944 : 310) describes (12a) as normal, and (12b) as « very heavy Swahili ».

(12a) (masanduku) ambayo sisi watu wawili au watatu hatuwezi kuyainua (boxes) which two or even three of us could not lift
(12b) (masanduku) tusiyouweza sisi watu wawili au watatu kuyainua.

Ashton furthermore observes that type C constructions are required for non-restrictive relative clauses (1944 : 310). I have not been able to find out how strict a rule this is.
(13) Hapo kale nchi ya Uganda haikuwa na watu ila mmoja, ambaye alitwa Kintu

Long ago the country of Uganda had no inhabitants except one, who was called Kintu

Finally, a type C relative construction is the only possible choice when « tenses » other than the simple AOR/PRES/PAST/FUT/NEG are desired (see also (4b) and (6/C) above).

(14a) (vitabu) ambavyo sitavisoma (books) which I am not going to read
(14b) (vitabu) ambavyo u(si)visome (books) which you should (not) read

We may conclude that the spread of type C relative constructions is less due to superior syntactic accessibility than has sometimes been assumed. Its main advantages lie in its morphological and word order versatility.

REFERENCES


CONTRIBUTION TO THE DISCUSSION

I would like to profit from the discussion which followed the presentation of this paper (and continued outside the official session) and add the following remarks:

(1) The non-occurrence of type C relative constructions in 19th century Kiunguja is supported by the absence of such forms from the autobiography of Tippu Tip (Gudrun Miehe, personal communication). Various other — though sometimes conflicting — views on use, frequency, and chronology of type C relative constructions are assembled and quoted in Van ’t Veld 1966.

(2) I think the stress on -ná-, -li-, -si- and -taká- in type B constructions should not be described as « secondary stress », and thus there is no need to assign Swahili different degrees
of distinctive stress. There is only a general rule which reduces non-phrase final stress; the two examples below are identical as far as stress (levels) are concerned:

- a.na.so.ma ki.ta.bu he is reading a book
- a.nà.ye.a.ndi.ka he who writes

(3) The attestation of type C relative constructions in old Swahili poetry rules out any possibility of their being a borrowing from English. Generally, type C constructions have more syllables than those of type A or B, thus the former are unlikely to be modern substitutes for older (type A or B) constructions in poetic texts. However, it is not at all unlikely that the recent spread of type C has been favoured by its structural similarity to the relative construction in English.

(4) The suggestion was made that the form amba-RC might never have had a subject concord — which would mean that it did not develop out of the type A construction. The suggested « parallel » (from Sanga L. 35) did not convince me because it concerned a complementizer, not a « relative pronoun ». On the other hand, the loss of a subject concord is attested in Swahili by forms such as (i)japo « although ». Even more direct evidence has since come to my attention: Van 't Veld (1966: 97) cites Giryama forms (from Westen, 1903) where the subject concord is still present: (mimi) nambaye, (kitu) chambæcho. If such forms are indeed the source of type C relative constructions, the original paraphrase would have been « (I) who say », « (the thing) which says », etc.

(5) An interesting hypothesis was put forward concerning the (pre-Swahili) origin of type A relative constructions. In the following two examples the formative PP-o (PP = pronominal prefix) appears in postfinal position in non-relative verb forms.

Ngazija (example provided by M. LAFON):

- tsi-m-nika-šo I give it to him
  SC OC give RC
  lsg 1 7

Tikuu (example from D. NURSE, 1982: 101):

- v - enda - vo they are going
  SC go RC
  2 2

The Ngazija example shows that the « relative concord » is but a special instance of the more general « referential concord » (RC), which is also true for Standard Swahili (Kisanifu); see, for instance, its use in demonstratives and after -ingine-. The suggestion now is that either one of these two constructions could somehow have transformed (« il y avait un passage ») into Swahili type A relative constructions. I think this is very unlikely.

The Ngazija example — and parallels could be cited from a wide range of Bantu languages — shows the use of the RC (PP-o) as an anaphoric (second) object pronoun. It can only occur with (bi-)transitive verbs, and how exactly it could have changed into a general relative remains unclear. The Tikuu example looks more promising because it is not limited to transitive verbs, and it appears to be a construction particular for this specific northeastern Bantu area. The closest parallel I know of exists in Rimi (or: Nyaturu) where certain non relative verb forms have a tone-copy of the subject concord in postfinal position (Schadeberg, 1978/79). There is good comparative evidence that these and similar verb forms were originally relative verb forms (cf. Nsuka, 1982). I therefore suggest that the Tikuu form above (as well as equivalent forms in other Northern Swahili dialects) have their historical source in relative verb forms, and that they changed into absolute forms by way of topicalized cleft sentences such as « it is they who go ».
REFERENCES

