About The transcripts

In the footnotes of the transcripts some of the statements are surrounded by citation marks. Those indicate that it is a statement from one of the assistants. The footnote statements which are not surrounded by citation marks come from Lars Magnusson.

r = a tap pronunciation, [ɾ]
l = a lateral alveolar pronunciation [l]
/ = the liquid phoneme where there is neither a clear [ɾ] or a clear [l]
rr = a tremulant pronunciation, [r]
ch = an affricate pronunciation as in the English word 'child', [tʃ]
ly = /ʎ/
xxx = impossible to hear what the speaker is saying

sg = singular
pl = plural
pr = present
pa = past
fut = future
1, 2, 3 etc = noun class number
1p = 1st person
2p = 2nd person
poss = possessive prefix
obj = object concord
pass = passive
recipr = reciprocal
refl = reflexive
imp = imperative
neg = negative
obl = obligation
subj = subjunctive
pn = pronoun
caus = causative
voc = vocative
tr = transitive
intr = intransitive
appl = applied extension
agt = agentive
dim = diminutive

Most of the terms above should be familiar to anyone with basic linguistic knowledge. The term 'concord' is used for those morphemes preceding verbs which agree with the noun class of the subject or object. There is no real reason to regard these concords as anything else than verb-prefixes, just like agreement-markers in many European languages are verb-suffixes. However, in the transcripts standard word division procedures have been followed most of the time, which means that the

concords have been written as separate words.[1] The term 'applied extension' is not very common in general linguistics, but good explanations of the concept can be found in for instance Fivaz (1986:107-109) and Wisskirchen (1935:37).

FURTHER COMMENTS:

1) *ch* was chosen to represent the affricate sound, after considering various options, like *ch, tj, tsh* and *č*. *tsh* was used by the Catholic mission but has the disadvantage of having as many as three letters. *č* is the most efficient way of denoting the sound (having only one letter) but it is incompatible with most computer keyboards outside East European countries. *ch* to denote this affricate is in line with the standard orthography of the current official language of Namibia, English.

2) The 'm'-sound of the prefix and object concord of noun class 1 is generally considered to be a syllabic 'm', as is the 'm' in the prefix of noun class 3. Presumbaly this applies to the 'm' of the noun class 4 prefix and the 'm' of the 2p.pl concord as well. This 'm' has not been written *mu*, although it is written this way in the standard orthography of both Ndonga and Kwanyama. Instead it is written simply *m*, just like other instances of 'm'. The so-called *syllabic m:s* may be syllabic in a phonological sense, i.e. they may affect tonal behaviour, but I do not believe that these sounds should be called syllabic on *phonetic* grounds. One could of course argue that the syllable is a phonological unit and that there is no such thing as a phonetic definition of a syllabic consonant in the first place (see for instance Ladefoged&Maddieson 1996:282), but the point being made here is that the *m* in a word like *omulongi* is pronounced like the *m* in the English word 'hamlet', whereas the *m* in a common way of pronouncing *rhythm* to me would be a more prototypical syllabic 'm'.

3) The use of full stops in the Kwambi line coincides with what was regarded as some kind of sentence-final intonation. The term "some kind of sentence-final intonation" is of course very impressionistic, since it is questionable how to define sentences in spoken language, and it is even questionable whether the sentence-concept is relevant at all for speech. A question-mark '?' has been put after questions as is normally done in writing, and an exclamation mark '!' has been used where something is said forcefully.
　　　The distinction between the use of a comma, two dots and three dots also needs some explanation. Two or three dots were used when a pause was interpreted as occuring because of hesitation (with two dots meaning only a very short pause and three dots indicating a longer pause), whereas a comma was used where there was a pause or intonation break that seemed more planned or deliberate. This was of course also done rather impressionistically.

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[1] Even though it is tempting for a linguist to play around with the standardized way of dividing clauses into words in Oshiwambo, there seems to be at least one solid reason to stick to the standard orthography: most Owambos have serious problems writing their native tongue already, even people who find no problems in knowing what constitutes separate words in English, Afrikaans etc., and making up new methods for word-division could create even more confusion.

4) One decision that may be considered controversial is the decision not to reflect the difference between the so-called past completive and past incompletive in the interlinear coding. In both Ndonga and Kwambi there is a difference between for example *onda mona* and *onda mono*. In the present tense some verbs have vowel harmony, and the use of the past concord together with the vowel harmony form makes a difference in meaning when compared to the past tense concord combined with the form not having vowel harmony. For example, both the forms *ningi* and *ninga* were glossed simply as 'do', both *tumu* and *tuma* were glossed as 'send', both *ti* and *tya* were glossed as 'say' etc.[2] There are two reasons for this. The most important reason is that there are many cases where a verb does not have a separate form to be used in the past incompletive, but the distinction is still made, using tone. Since tone is not a topic included in this study it was not possible to distinguish between past completive and past incompletive for these verbs, and accordingly it would lead to an inconsistency if the distinction had been considered for the stems that do change form. A reason of much less importance is the fact that the interlinear coding, the way it is now, takes less space and is presumably easier to read than if every verb had to include one of the codings 'compl' and 'incompl' (like *ninga* would be glossed 'do.compl' and *ningi* 'do.incompl' when occuring with a past tense concord).

5) The coding of the demonstratives follows the following pattern:
The first d simply stands for 'demonstrative'. The following number refers to the noun class involved, e.g. 1 if the demonstrative refers to *omuntu, omukiintu* etc. The letter at the end is either 'a', 'b' or 'c'. 'a' refers to the set of demonstratives showing the closest proximity, i.e. *nguka, mpaka* etc. 'b' stands for the second set of demonstratives, indicating further distance away, i.e. *ngoka, mpoka* etc. 'c' stands for the set of demonstratives showing even further distance, i.e. *ngwiyaka, mpeyaka* etc.

6) There are three sets of prefixes which give rise to a phenomenon on the borderline between the concepts gender and case. They are usually just prefixed to other nouns without the normal noun-class prefix being taken off, like when egumbo becomes megumbo, kegumbo etc. Still, it is common practice to describe the phenomenon as nouns with these three prefixes belonging to three separate noun-classes, number 16, 17 and 18.
Class 16: p-, pa-[3], pu-, po[4]-
Class 17: k-, ku-, ko-
Class 18: m-, mu-, mo-
In the transcriptions these morphemes have been left without explanation in the interlinear translation. To put things in a very general way we can say that 16

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[2] With monosyllabic stems the difference between the two forms is not one of vowel harmony, but even in these cases it is a matter of leaving out an -*a* from the basic form of the verb, to give us the pairs *tya-ti, gwa-gu, pa-pe* etc., which are in the same relationships to each other as *ninga-ningi, tuma-tumu* etc.
[3] *pa-* exists in some expressions where an initial 'o' from the following noun is not present *pamuthigululwakalo* (compare *omuthigululwakalo*), *pakutara* (compare *okutara*), whereas *pu-* is the normal alternative for noun class 16 where classes 17 and 18 would have *ku-* and *mu-* respectively. The *pa-* is a relic from an age when class 16 had not yet aquired a form analogous to the forms of classes 17 and 18. Another reflection of this phenomenon is the co-existence of the form *ope na* (= there is) and the younger form *opu na*, which has been formed in analogy with *oku na* and *omu na*.
[4] For a further dicussion of the allomorphs *po-, ko-* and *mo-* see 18) below.

generally deals with location at or next to something, 17 with movement to or from, or location at something far away, and 18 deals with location inside.

These "noun classes" also have corresponding particles po, ko and mo respectively. The particle *mo* should not be confused with the demonstrative *mo*. Just as with the prefixes these particles are not explained in the interlinear translation. In some cases a particle added to a verb gives a new meaning to the whole, but other times we can find that the addition of the particle doesn't really change anything. When the presence of a particle changes the meaning the change in meaning is often related to the kinds of spatial concept denoted by the noun-class in question, i.e. location inside something for *mo* (class 18) etc.

7) The lexical morpheme *za* (present tense form *zi*), which is a verb, has also been left without interlinear translation, since it doesn't really correspond to any particular English morpheme. It is the opposite of *ha* (='go'). Compare *oto hi peni?* and *oto zi peni?,* which mean 'where are you going' and 'where are you coming from' respectively. *Za mo!* is an order to get out of something and *za po!* is an order to get away from something. There is a verb *ya* which is a closer equivalent to the English 'come', and because of that 'come' has been avoided as a translation of *za*.

8) The small function word *li* has also been left without explanation in the interlinear translations. Sometimes its meaning is similar to English 'be' (as in for instance *onda li kOchakati* = 'I was in Oshakati'), but it did not seem appropriate to gloss it as 'be'.

There is also another word *li*, which means 'eat'. This *li* also has the variant *lyi*.[5] There are cases where the function word *li* too is pronounced with what sounds like a palatal lateral, but no instances of that word have been transcribed 'lyi'. Instead these cases have been written '/i', i.e. having the symbol '/' which represents a realization of the liquid phoneme which is neither "a clear r" or "a clear l". The reason for that is that this *li* does not seem to have two versions in the way the word for 'eat' has. Instead the pronunciation with a palatal lateral (or at least something that sounds like a palatal lateral) in the function word *li* must be considered to be the result of co-articulation in rapid speech, caused by inertia of the speech organs.

9) The function word *shi* has also been left without explanation. This word occurs together with a negative concord to show that something "is not" something, for example *kandi shi ondjamba* (= I am not an elephant).

10) Some conjunctions and adverbs have been left without an interlinear translation when it has been difficult to find a suitable English equivalent. The interested reader will have to look at the free translations when these words are involved, to get an understanding how the words are used. Some examples are *ano*, *nande* and *ngaa*. The latter example, *ngaa*, is frequent in the corpus, but most of the time Johanna Nakambonde dismissed it as adding nothing to the meaning. Indeed, both assistants

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[5] One person that I discussed this issue with considers the variant *lyi* to be "child language", but in the Kwambi recordings it occurs in the speech of very old people.

many times left these *ngaa:s* out of the initial transcripts, claiming that they were "nothing". Perhaps this *ngaa* is best treated as an interjection.

Some other empty spaces in the translations are because of uncertainty regarding for example meaning or the correct way of analyzing a certain feature.

11) The prefix 'o-' could be discussed at length, but I will here try a brief explanation. At some point in the development of the neighbouring languages Herero and Wambo the speakers started introducing initial o-sounds at many places. In the case of the noun-class prefixes I have simply considered the 'o-' as part of the prefix in the modern situation, without having any morpheme status of its own. This has also been done with the initial o:s of the concords, although this may be slightly more controversial. The third use of initial o:s seems to have a clearer meaning-changing function. Most of the times it is simply a feature which turns something into a predicate. Compare:

Ongereka hiihenguti = The church made of stalks
Ongereka ohiihenguti = The church is made of stalks

The use of these initial o:s on pronouns is not like we would expect from the above, but an initial 'o-' is often added without necessarily giving the pronoun the status of predicate:

Ongaye Tandeusa haTaru = I am Tadeus Taru
Ngaye Tandeusa haTaru = same as above
Iipumbu yaChirongo **ohe** omurumentu rera, omukwiita = Iipumbu Chirongo was a real man, a soldier.

In these cases too the 'o-' has simply been analyzed as part of the pronoun, not being a morpheme in itself. However, when comparing the two first examples above there may be some kind of difference in the pragmatic function between the two options, even though the English translation is the same in both cases. Because of this as well as other factors it is safe to say that the use of this prefix 'o-' in Wambo could deserve a study on its own. Fivaz (1986) calls it "positive predicator", which is an interesting term.

12) The morpheme used to indicate future tense, *ka*, also appears in cases where the English translation does not include any future tense, i.e. this morpheme also has other functions. Still it has been labelled 'fut' even in those cases, to indicate that we are not dealing with another *ka*, such as the class 12 concord or the verb *ka* meaning 'fell trees'.

13) In a number of cases a word clearly consists of the reflexive prefix 'i-' and a verb stem, but the meaning is not strictly a reflexive version of the verb, and thus the word has not been analyzed in two parts. Instead one English word has been put under the undivided whole. For instance *ilonga* has been translated as 'study' rather than as 'refl' and 'teach'. I would not want to argue that this is the only correct solution.

Similarly, there are some cases where other derivational suffixes also have not been analyzed separately from the stem for similar reasons.

14) One decision which may be controversial is the decision to regard the nasal sound after the initial 'o-' in nouns belonging to noun class 9 as part of the prefix. Historically this is certainly the correct interpretation. This nasal sound - whether it be a bilabial one (as in e.g. *ombashe*), an alveolar one (as in e.g. *ontsezi*) or a velar one (as in e.g. *onkoshi*) - is the old prefix, which itself constituted the class 9 prefix before the historically relatively recent adding of a "pre-prefix" 'o-'. However, in the modern situation it seems that speakers regard the *o-* as the actual noun class 9 prefix, since this 'o-' is added to most modern borrowings (*ocooldrank*, *oTV*, *opolitika*(se Helmut) etc., not *oncooldrank*, *onTV*, *ompolitika* etc.).

For the same historical reasons the nasal sound has been considered to be part of the class 10 prefix as well, giving *een-gandu* etc.

15) There was also a decision to present the concords undivided, i.e. for example *otahi* as "9pr", rather than dividing it into *ota-hi* and then giving "pr" (=present tense) and "9" as interlinear translations. I am not arguing that this is the only correct solution, but at least it avoids an issue such as whether to divide for instance the 2sing.pr concord *oto* in two or not (or *ke,* the negative concord for class 1).

Similarly, it would of course have been possible to analyze some noun modifiers into parts:

Ya -ne ga-ne hi - ili   dhi - ili   , etc.
 2 four 6 four 9 another 10 another

But some others would be slightly more difficult to divide, such as *oyendji*, *ayeshe* etc. Now all these modifiers are treated similarly, as units. As with the concords mentioned above, this is of course not the only correct solution.

16) The interpretation of a word such as *humbata* as an allomorph of *umbata*, occuring only in certain grammatical contexts, is rather strange. In English there are different ways of making plural, -s, -z and -ɪz. These variations are normally explained by stating different allomorphs of **the plural morpheme**, not different allomorphs of **the stem**, /hɔːs/ vs /hɔːsɪ/ etc. Similarly it would make sense to regard *a-* and *ah-* as two allomorphs of the past concord prefix for noun class 1 (*a-ninga* but *ah-umbata* etc.), and similar procedures for the other concords giving rise to an *h* with some Kwambi verbs. The only reason for not doing this is the disjunctive orthography which treats the concords as separate words.

17) A point which is uncontroverisal but requires some comment is the decision to treat noun classes 15 and 17 as two separate classes. Class 15 is probably originally a result of a specialized use of class 17 (see Guthrie (1971:9) for a further discussion of the facts relating to this issue), and their grammatical forms in Wambo are generally identical (demonstratives, concords etc.), but there are at least two reasons for regarding class 15 as a separate class in modern Wambo:

a) The general addition of a 'pre-prefix' with no meaning of its own has affected the words in class 15 as well as other noun classes, but not the locative classes 16-18, compare for instance *okukiitumba* (=to sit down)[6] and *kumeme* (=to my mother).

b) Whereas the 'u' of the prefix associated with class 17 is normally omitted before a vowel (*kochipangero*, not **kuochipangero* or **kwochipangero*), class 15 retains this 'u', although it is realized as a non-syllabic [w] before 'a', 'i', 'o' and 'e' (*okwiimba*, *okwaawara* etc).

The extended use of a locative class indicating direction to make infinitive verbforms exactly parallells the use of English 'to' as an infinitive marker if Guthrie's suggestion is correct, and similar situations in other West Germanic languages. The inclusion of some concrete nouns in this class may be harder to explain.

18) In the analysis the locative noun class prefixes have been considered as having allomorphs *po-*, *ko-* and *mo-*. Similarly the possessive prefixes have been considered as having allomorphs with 'o' in them (*gwo-*, *yo-*, *dho-* etc.), and the morpheme *na-* (='and', 'with') has been seen as having an allomorph *no-*. The reason for this is that there are cases like *gomombimbeli*, *yonare*, *honena*, *moZimbabwe*, *nokUtsathima* etc. We could analyze a word like *yonena* (as in for example *aantu yonen*a (='people of today') as 'y-onena', i.e. as adding a possessive prefix to a word *onena*, instead of analysing it as 'yo-nena'. This would not be completely unjustified since one can say for instance *onena ndjika* (='this today'), so that it seems that there is a word *onena* which has a noun class 9 prefix. However, both *moChina* and *muChina* seem to occur, even though the name of the country is *China*, not **Ochina*. The same holds true for other countries (*moNamibia/muNamibia* etc.). Regarding the possessive prefixes we would have expected **ga**mombimbeli, *omupresidente* **gwa**muChina etc. However, only prefixes with 'o' occur in these cases, in spite of the fact that 'in the bible' and 'in China' would not normally start with o-, i.e. they would be *mombimbeli* and *muChina* or *moChina* respectively, not *omombibeli* and *omuChina/omoChina*.

19) *Tya* as used in expressions meaning 'such' has been left without interlinear coding since it is not clear to me whether this *tya* is etymologically speaking the same as *tya* meaning 'say'. An example of its use is *kaku na eraka lyochikwambi lya tya ngaa* (='there is no such Kwambi language, there is no Kwambi language like that').

References:

Fivaz, Guthrie, Malcolm (1971): *Comparative Bantu: an introduction to the comparative linguistics and prehistory of the Bantu languages, vol.2*. London: xxxxxxxxxx

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[6] Note however that there is a surprising frequency of cases without this intiial pre-prefix 'o-' in the Kwambi literature (e.g. "*Nge mwa ara kupopya omaraka...*") in addition to numerous cases which have it. There are some cases of ellipted 'o-' for noun class 15 words in the spoken corpus as well. See also 18).