

Ethnic and linguistic reconstitution among Bantu languages:

The cases of Rangi (F33) and Mbugwe (F34) in Tanzania

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1. Introduction

1. “Tribes are a colonial invention” and “Languages do not exist”
2. Historical linguistics as a historical science
3. Language contact and history

“Tribes are a colonial invention”

- often mentioned in African studies
- very true, as we will see in the case study
- but languages existed and hence speech communities
- and the connection of a speech community to societal and cultural practices is crucial for historical linguistics to be a window to history
- study mechanisms of formation of speech communities and emphasize its dynamics

“Languages do not exist”

- rather, poly-/trans-languaging,
- but they do, as an abstraction
- that we can't do without
- indeed we need to keep in mind that it is an abstraction
- Not only used by reserchers
- and named, not only by researchers

Historical linguistics as history

- Linguistics is built on the principles of hard science of predictability and falsification
- Historical science tells a story as the most convincing scenario to convince the audience as jury
- Historical linguistics has the comparative method as hard evidence

Language contact and history

- Contact induced change → contact situation → social situation
- We have models (Van Coetsem, Ross) to infer these steps
- But the models cannot predict
- ← does not work: language shift without a trace is common
- models lack a basis in systematic large scale inventories of contact induced change and how it came about

2. Bantu linguistic history

- long time established field
- The reconstruction of proto Bantu
- extensive lexical reconstruction, but still work to do
- well-known sound laws
- extensive morphological reconstruction
- currently more synchronic comparison

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- need for bottom-up, detailed reconstruction and borrowing resulting in stratification as in Möhlig's 2007 article on Rumanyo, and Roth & Gibson (2019) on Ngoreme (Mara Bantu)
- ideally an areal approach

3. The case of Rangi and Mbugwe

- 3.1 Introduction

Names

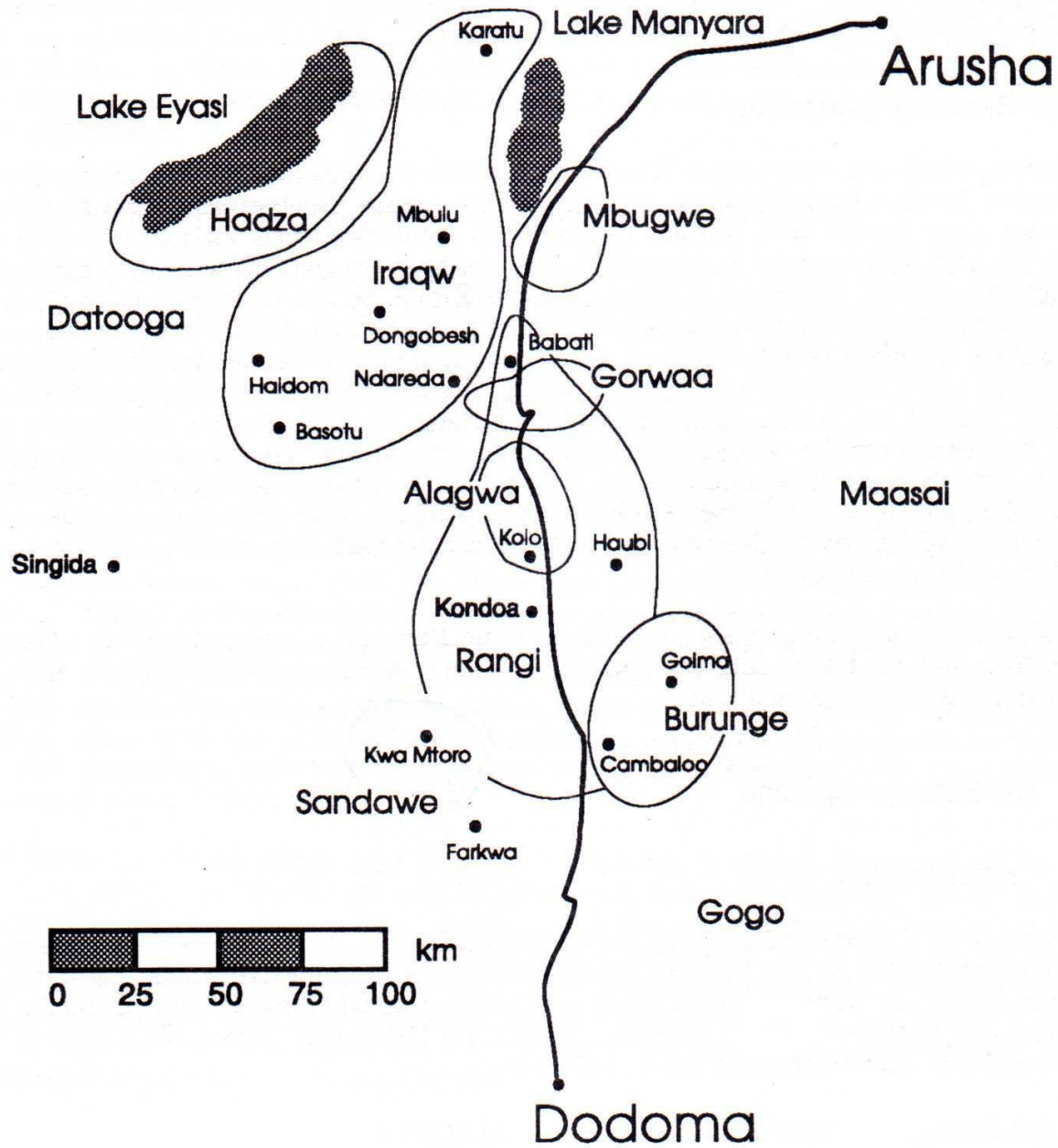
Since my presentation is in English, I use “English” or international-scientific language names:

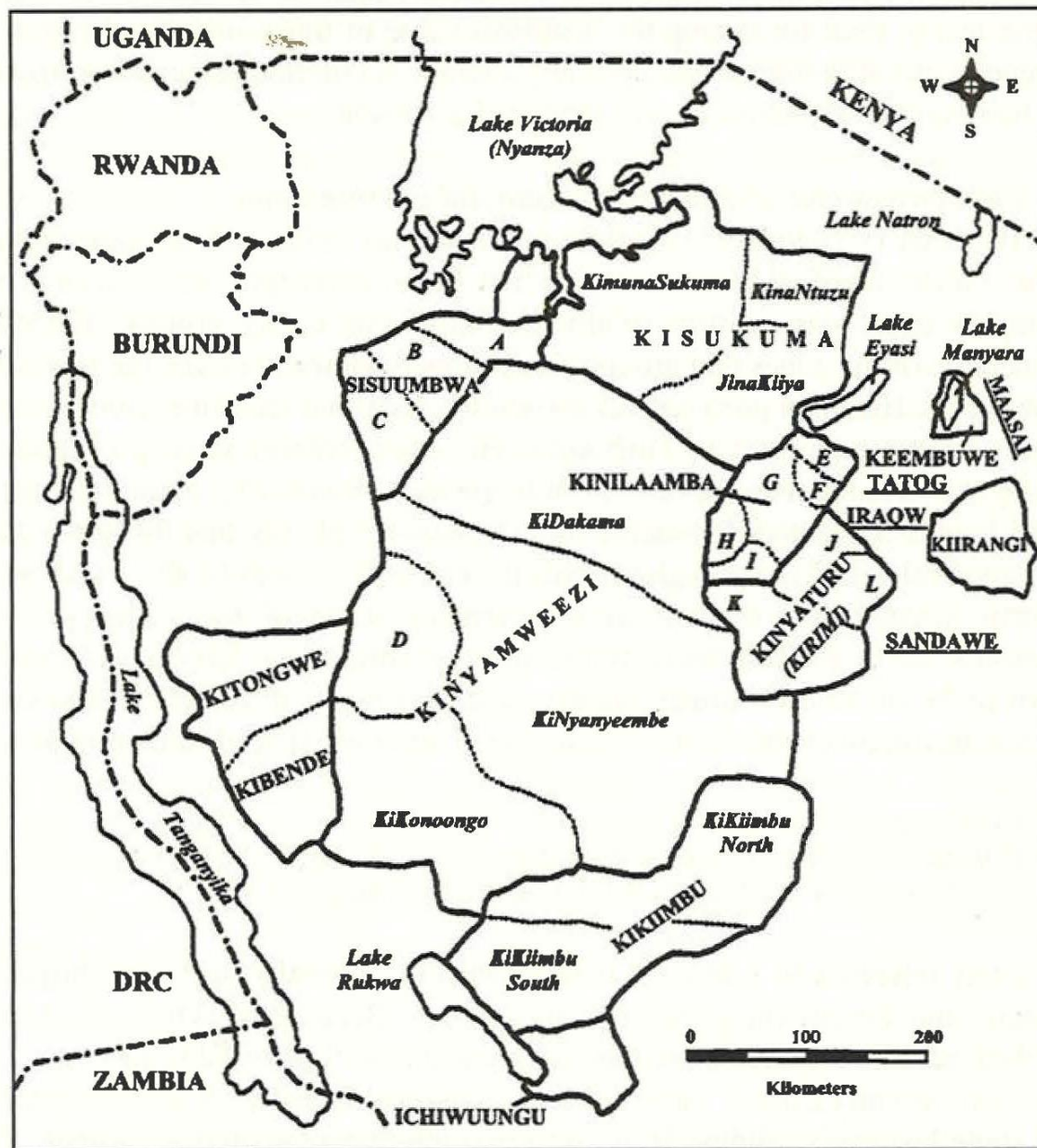
- Rangi = KiLangi (F33)
- Mbugwe = KeBuwe (F34)

Why I am interested

Current project of early history of East Africa:

- Approach of contact areas and stratification.
- One area is Tanzanian Rift Valley
- Central issue is the stratification of non-Bantu transfer into Bantu (and other) languages
- this presentation concentrates on Bantu-Bantu contact
- Rangi and Mbugwe exactly in WR Cushitic area





Bottom up: Rangi Mbugwe

- Rangi and Mbugwe are considered to be closely related both by speakers and in the literature
- Masele (2001) is sceptical “Although there is a lower count of shared uniquely created vocabulary between F33 and F34, there is reason to believe that these two are related genetically, supported by native speaker intuition”

3.2 Vocabulary

- What I did
- used Masele's lists of vocabulary for Rangi and for Mbugwe and concentrated on lexical differences
- reviewed these lists with speakers of both languages to establish whether they are truly differences
- as a necessary second step after a first collection by Masele

Rangi link to North

term	Rangi	Mbugwe	F31-32	other links
old person	mwòòsì	mokolo	mnyapaa	S. Pare, Taveta, Nyiha: mgosi Tharaka: mukuru; Wungu: unchikolo
return	kòfyòókà kòhenduka	otaaloka [not in Rangi]	Nyaturu: suka Nyiramba: shooka	S. Pare: hunduka; taaloka has no links unless related to Sw toroka 'leave'

Mbugwe link to North

term	Rangi	Mbugwe	F31-32	other links
gazelle	vòdò 'dikdik'	njèèrá [not in Rangi]	mpaa	Mbugwe term: Tharaka: ncheere
heel (foot)	kìchínó	ntútúnyá [not in Rangi]	Nyaturu itinyinyo	Mbugwe term is closest to S. Pare tutunye; Rangi term to Kamba kitiino
heart	mòtìimà	ḡkólò [not in Rangi]	Nyiramba: nkolo; Nyaturu: nhkoo	The Rangi -tima root is PB and links to Uganda and Luguru. The Mbugwe kolo root is wide-spread and occurs in Tharaka, Kilimanjaro, Mara, F, etc.
palate	ilaka [not in Mbugwe]	kalákalá [not in Rangi]		Rangi term: Bondei: ulaka; Mbugwe term: S. Pare: ikarakara

Rangi link to East

term	Rangi	Mbugwe	F31-32	other links
frog	ìbùùlà	chòórà [not in Rangi]	ntoondo	Kami: bulwa; Kutu, Kwere: bula; Luguru butwa; Zaramo: bula (all Morogoro area)
palate	ilaka [not in Mbugwe]	kalákalá [not in Rangi]	lexemes different from these	Bondei: ulaka; S. Pare: ikarakara

Links to Corridor Bantu

term	Rangi	Mbugwe	F31-32	other links
finger	ìnàambà (also toes except for big toe)	mòònwè [not in Rangi]	mwa-chà	Both Mbugwe and Rangi terms have links to Corridor Bantu Mambwe, Namwanga: umunwe; Nyiha: iyahaamba
well	ìdùùndù	soola; ràámbò		Mbugwe link to Corridor: Ndari: isula; Nyakyusa kwisula; no links for the other lexemes

Intermediate conclusions

- Attempting to be complete in etymologising the vocabulary is sheer impossible
- All observations are clouded by the vast number of unaccounted lexicon
- Both Rangi and Mbugwe show links with Chaga-Pare in their vocabulary
- Rangi shows some links with Morogoro-Bondei area
- Both show some (little) lexical connection to Bantu languages in the Mbeya area. Masele (2001: 441) assumes contact for Sukuma, Nyamwezi and discusses Bungu/Wungu (F25) now in that area.
- Rangi and Mbugwe show loans from different Cushitic languages. Mbugwe from Maasai.

3.3 Differentiating sound laws

- can shared sound laws (or not) indicate Rangi and Mbugwe relatedness (or not)?
- in view of the early proposals for Rangi sharing sound laws with Chaga-Pare

Rangi shared with Chaga-Pare

Nurse 1999

1. $*t > c$ before high vowels,
2. g-loss,
3. loss of $*b$ before round vowels and $*b > v$ elsewhere,
4. $*p > f$ before tense vowels (but no Spirantization otherwise),
5. $*d > r$ before tense vowels but $*d > l$ and r before non-tense vowels.
6. two forms of Class 10 as plural of Class 11 (Kilimanjaro-Taita, Langi)

No clear isoglosses for F30.

1. Are these indeed shared with Chaga-Pare?
2. And shared with or different from rest of F30, F zone?
3. Shared by Rangi and Mbugwe?
4. What do exceptions tell us?

t > c / __i, u (high close vowel)

Rangi	Mbugwe	PB	meaning	Swahili	Pare	Chaga	
mpìchí	mpítí	-pítì	hyena	fisi	(ibau)	(fisi)	Embe: mbiti; Zanaki : ehiti
ò- chíkó	ò-tíkù	-tíkò	night	usiku	(kio)	(kio)	F32: utiku; Zanaki : obutik u
Ichimu	timo		spear				
kì- chìkò	kètíkò	-tíkò	rainy season	ma- sika	ma- shíka	(kisie)	F32: gitiku; F31: ketiku

Rangi	Mbugwe	PB	meaning	Pare	Chaga	
ìchùùmbì	tùùmbí	- túmbí	seat	ki-chúmbí	-r*ika	Zanaki: ekitumbi
kò- chùmà	òtúmà	-túm-	sew, weave, knit	ku-chúma	ifuma	Zanaki: - tuma
kò-chwá màtì	otyá màtá	-tú-	spit	(ku-tufa malute)	(-ipucha maRa)	Zanaki; - twa amate F32: utia mate; F31: kwi-tia mate
kò- chúúṅgà	ò-túṅgà	túṅg-	tie	ku- chunga	ifunga	F32:u- tunga; F31: kwi-tuunga
ku-chula	ù-túlà		pound (grain)			
kò-chwà	ò-tyá		reap, harvest			

Remarks

- There is also occasional variation within Rangi: *kitingo* ~ *kichingo* ‘necklace, beads’ (Nchimbi: BaC1538)
- There are a few exceptions where Rangi has *s* for PB *t* before a close high vowel. 3 can be explained as Swahili loan: *siku* ‘day’, *kisíima* ‘well, pool’, *-sindíkira* ‘accompany’
- *súua* ‘swell’ from PB*-*tuud* for which there is no explanation.
- *sásatu* ‘six’ while a form like *ntandatu* is widespread in East Africa. Mbugwe has *s* as reflex for *t* in *sààtó* ‘three’ from PB **tátù* where Rangi has *t*, *itàtù*. Mara Bantu languages have *-sato* for ‘three’.

Observation

- The palatalisation of *t* to *c* before close high vowels is indeed a sound change that Rangi shares with Pare
- and that is not shared with the F30 languages,
- nor with Mbugwe
- Palatalisation before close high *i* is very natural can could easily be a parallel independent change
- Before high close *u* less so

Intermediate conclusions

1. Are these indeed shared with Chaga-Pare?

t>c at least with Pare; g>0 with Chaga, not Pare; *b ?; p>f yes

2. And shared with or different from rest of F30, F zone?

Not t>c; g>0 possibly next step of development on F30; R and Mb both different from F30 in fate of *b (lost in Nyaturu, Nyiramba); p>f shared with Nyaturu where it is global = 1 step further

3. Shared by Rangi and Mbugwe?

Not t>c but Rangi possibly isolated innovation; maybe g>0; fate of *b inconclusive; not p>f/_i,u

4. What do exceptions tell us?

confirm lexical links to both Pare/Chaga and Nyaturu and Corridor; and changes in last century in Rangi

Developments: lexical replacement

Rangi	Mbugwe	ProtoBantu	meaning	Swahili	Pare	
lò-fyò	lò-shó	-píʃ	knife	kisu	(kahan di)	Nyamw ezi: lʊshʊ; Chaga: kishu, kyandu

The item for ‘knife’ actually has a variant *lusyo* in Rangi in its earliest attestations: Seidel has *lufyu*, *lusho* but later researchers (Nchimbi, Dunham, Stegen, Gibson) note *lʊ-fyɔ*.

3.4 Morphological criteria

From Stegen (2003), Dunham (2007), Nurse (1999)

1. i- reciprocal
2. 19 as plural diminutive
3. 2 plurals of 11
4. prenominal demonstrative Rangi, Shambaa, Mbugu
Very common Bantu innovation; easily parallel development.
Also in Swahili of the area in colonial times (Kießling 1995).
5. Additional clause final negation: Rangi, Mbugwe and East Chaga
too general as structural phenomenon

i- “infix” for reciprocal

- Rangi: “the reciprocal suffix *-an* has merged semantically with the reflexive marker *-í-*. geographically limited innovation shared with other Bantu F languages like Sukuma and Nyamwezi.”
- Mbugwe: The reflexive/reciprocal object prefix *i-* is used instead of a reciprocal derivational extension
Wilhelmsen (2018): also in G. In Kagulu *ki-* Petzell (2008: 88).
- Nyamwezi reflexive is *í-*; no productive reciprocal *-an*. (Maganga & Schadeberg 1992). Lexicon contains some natural reciprocal verbs with a lexicalised reflexive infix, *-ishíná* ‘play’, *-iyójá* ‘quarrel’.
- Nyaturu *í-* is most common for reciprocal (and is also reflexive) (Olsen 1964: 158-9, 172-3)
- Not in Chaga, Pare, Taita

This looks like a F-zone innovation and is evidence for classification of Rangi and Mbugwe as F.

19 *fi* plural of *ka-* for diminutives

- Rangi and Mbugwe 19 plural for diminutives *ka/fi*
- also other F30 languages Nyiramba and Nyaturu
- Nyiramba (Ittameier 1922-23:25) *phi-*, (*phy-*) plural dim. Additive prefixes
- Nyaturu *fi-* plural dim. *bi-*, *fi-* Dempwolff (1915); now *vi-* = class 8 Olsen (1964)
- the rest of F (Nyamwezi, Sukuma) has *ka/tu*) for diminutives.
- a quirk that is potentially insightful for subclassification.
- connect to other Bantu languages with this property: Luguru G35 and Hunde D51 (Maho 1999)
- Luguru: *ila* diminutive; pl: *pfi-* 19=8 (Mkude 1974)

...

Mara-Bantu

Ikoma NTK (JE45)	19 e-hi-
Ngoreme NGQ (JE401)	19 e-hi-
Ikizu IKZ (JE402)	19: e-he-
as alternative for 12 13	

(Wilhelmsen 2015:106; Aunio et al. 2019)

Kabwa, Simbiti, Kiroba (Oosterom 2019) and Zanaki have 12|8.

...

- 20th century sources for Rangi and Mbugwe do not report a plural of *ka-* 13 diminutive or report that there is none Seidel (1898) Dempwolff (1915-16:116-117) Berger 1930s in Akhavan-Zadjani (1990)
- Could this be a late development in Rangi and Mbugwe under Nyaturu or Nyiramba influence?
- What is the historical interpretation of the Mara Bantu connection, if any?

...

Further afield:

19 as a *special* plural diminutive is common in East Congo

19 for plural diminutive is either old in Bantu or an innovation that is valid for the predecessor of East Bantu. Most EA Bantu languages lost it. No language in EA Bantu has a class 19 SINGULAR diminutive (as in Cameroonians Bantu).

In that case this is a common retention rather than a common innovation?

I profited from discussion with Rasmus Bernander

Two plurals of class 11

There are two forms of Class 10 as plural of Class 11 in Kilimanjaro-Taita and in Rangi (Nurse 1999)

Chaga: plural of 11: 10a ndzo-; 10 N- for some words (Raum 1909:54)

Davida: lu- | cu- 10a or N- 10 (Philippson 1983: 178; Sakamoto 2003:14)

Sagala: lu- | cu- 10a or N- 10 (Woodward 1913/14:94)

- Rangi: 11/10 or 10 a (Dunham 2005:91-2)

– 10 N-	cl. 11		cl. 10a
– 10a ndʒʊ-	lu-fyɔ	« couteau »	ndʒʊ-fyɔ « couteaux »
	lu-vu	« caméléon »	ndʒʊ-vu « caméléons »
	lu-(w)ulu	« colline »	ndʒʊ-(w)ulu « collines »
	lw-aavu	« filet, piège »	ndʒ-aavu « filets, pièges »

- Mbugwe: No indication for *ndʒʊ-* 10a. All plurals of 11 are 10 N- (Mous 2004, Wilhelmsen 2018)
- Nyaturu has 11/10 or 11/6 (Olsen 1964:70), Verhoeven (n.d. early) mentions *ndu-* 10 as plural of 11.
- Nyiramba has *nzi* as plural of monosyllabic roots in 11 (no examples) (Johnson 1923). Other sources mention only class 10 N- for plurals of 11 (Ittameier 1922-23:25).
- Nyamwezi has 11/10 only (Maganga & Schadeberg 1992:61-62)

This looks like a shared innovation of Rangi (not Mbugwe) with Chaga and Taita but with apparent traces in Nyaturu, Nyiramba

Lexicon, sound laws, morphology

- Morphology less easily borrowed and more fundamental than lexicon. Or is this too general? Case for case
- i-reflexive developed by bilinguals?: Bilingual speakers who have i- for both reciprocal and reflexive in one of their languages and as reflexive in their other language can easily extend the reciprocal meaning to the reflexive in that language. If this happened for Rangi, the speakers of that other Bantu language copied this extended function of the reflexive.
- Class 10 plural allomorph not productive, in small subset, prone to loss. In lexical borrowing transfer of base, singular, with plural productive in recipient language.
- fi- plural for diminutives could be copied from new speakers especially when in need for a dedicated plural, only losing voicing of class 8 prefix vi-.
- Sound laws show regularity in lexical cognates; competing laws are reflex of different lexical links. In practice not always straightforward know what is inherited and what borrowed.

3.5 Linguistic scenarios

- reflexive for reciprocal: joined innovation of Rangi and Mbugwe with Fzone (which is not a unit) or influence of bilingual Nyaturu speakers on both, together or separate
- nju- 10a lexical link Rangi and Chaga or remnants in pockets Nyilamba, Nyaturu, Rangi; lost elsewhere
- 19 fi as plural diminutive retention in some of Mara-Bantu, Nyiramba, Nyaturu, Rangi. Possibly contact Mara and Nyiramba, Nyaturu. Possibly recent Nyaturu influence in Rangi
- Sound laws and lexicon: shared cognates with Nyaturu, Chaga and Pare, but also a bit with Nguu-Bondei, others.

...

- Nyaturu and Chaga-Pare components in both Mbugwe and in Rangi but shared.
- Also strong influence of Rangi on Mbugwe.

3.6 Rangi Oral Traditions

- settlement in Kondoa area East of Haubi at escarpment with Maasai plains; Haubi, spread
- mention of Nguru, Nyaturu (Vaweno clan)
- of Burunge and Alagwa to become Rangi, their own clans [Rangi-Alagwa one tribe]
- Traditions of a northern origin
- Nyaturu and Nyiramba have traditions of origin near Lake Victoria

Oral history collected in Haubi

- from West-Kilimanjaro, links with Kisii
- cultivated pearl millet and looked for warmer area
- stopped in northern Mbugwe (who were hunters); contact with Mbugwe resulted in similarity in language; Galapo-Bereko-Bolisa-Haubi. Contact with Burunge and Alagwa.

Mbugwe - Rangi

- myth of people getting lost chasing the partridge bird (= *mbowe*)
- tradition of visits to Lake Babati for salt
- half of Mbugwe clans claim Rangi origin

Mbugwe

- home land is northern tip of Lake Manyara
- long and hostile contact with Maasai
- clan histories of 9-10 generations
- 18 clans with their origin songs
- 5 from Nyaturu/Nyisanzu origin; 9 clans from Rangi origin; 4 from Iraqw-Datooga origin
- original inhabitants Verwana, cultivators, were absorbed.

Årlin (2011:72) on Mbugwe

...the Mbugwe never constituted an ethnic group,
they were a multitude of peoples amalgamated at
various times,

speaking and altering the language of the
dominant group,

so that it in turn becomes Kimbugwe.

... the diversity of the people denoted as
Mbugwe,

3.7 Scenarios: Mbugwe

Mbugwe had a strong influx of Rangi speakers with a profound influence on lexicon. The Datooga, Maasai and Gorwaa speakers/clans that became part of the amalgamated ethnic unit had little linguistic influence. Nyaturu and Chaga or Pare are both strong components in the language. There was an original group of cultivators. Could these have been related to Chaga or Pare? The danger in that hypothesis is that a large portion of the vocabulary is unique and no source found

Rangi

- Rangi too is an amalgamation of clans from different origins: Chaga or Pare plus Nyaturu, Alagwa and Burunge. Rangi and Alagwa are in the process of fusing in the current era. The grammatical consequences for Rangi are limited. The linguistic consequences are more imminent when the involved languages are relatively close and speakers can easily equate morphemes.

3.8 Summary and conclusions

- Linguistic and oral history scenarios reinforce each other's stories
- Ethnic units are dynamic and for related languages this can be shown in double reflexes of sounds, replacement borrowing, also in grammatical morphemes
- Lexical databases are still rather poor and there is a lot to do in finding etymologies

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