

# THE SYNTACTIC DISTRIBUTION OF RELATIVIZERS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF *-ENYE* RELATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS IN SHENG<sup>1</sup>

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This paper deals with structural variation in Sheng at the syntactic level by focusing on its relative constructions. Although numeral linguistic studies of Sheng have been published since the beginning of this century (Githiora 2002, Mbaabu & Nzuka 2003, Ferrari 2004, Ogechi 2005, Bosire 2006, 2008, Shinagawa 2006, 2007, Beck 2015, among others), their grammatical descriptions tend to be rather limited to the domain of morphology and the syntactic uniqueness of Sheng has scarcely been brought within the scope of precise linguistic analysis. This paper thus aims to describe the syntactic variation, or structural fluidity, found in relative constructions in Sheng and clarify the syntactic distribution of multiple relativizers. Based on these facts and analyses, the developmental process of the *-enye* construction, which is widely used in other Swahili contact varieties as well, will be further investigated especially from the perspectives of intra-Bantu language contact and cross-Bantu typology.

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## 1. Introduction

Swahili, as the largest language of wider communication across ethnic and social boundaries in East Africa, can be seen as a macro-language consisting of not only regional dialects spoken along the Eastern Coast (East Coast Swahili, ECS), but a number of inland varieties resulting from language contact with various indigenous and/or former colonial languages. Sheng is one such variety that developed as an urban lect in post-colonial Nairobi (cf. Abdulaziz and Osinde 1997, Spyropoulos 1987, among others) and is currently recognised as a distinct variety of Swahili classified as G40E in Maho's (2009) classification of the updated Guthrie codes. These

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varieties, which are referred to as Contact Swahili varieties (CS) hereafter, attracted intense linguistic attention at least at two focal points in the history of African linguistics.

The first wave of attention came in the late 1970s, when the study of language contact turned into a central issue of linguistics, presumably stimulated by theoretical proposals from pidgin-creole studies (cf. Bickerton 1981). The pioneering works on CS representative of the period include Myers-Scotton (1979), describing urban varieties spoken in Nairobi and Kampala, and Heine (1979), showing typological characteristics of not only CS but other contact languages spoken in Africa.<sup>2</sup>

Most of the works created in the second wave have been more or less influenced by the study of African urban youth languages initiated by the seminal paper by Kiessling & Mous (2004), focusing on the process and practice of creative language use in African urban settings; that is, they intend to describe the fluidity of linguistic practices as the *status quo*, rather than the abstract and static grammatical system.<sup>3</sup>

Though various contributions within these and other approaches<sup>4</sup> have dealt with the linguistic structures of Sheng, its syntactic aspects have scarcely been a subject of precise description and analysis. For example, while Ogechi (2005) who discusses the grammatical uniqueness of Sheng, and Bosire (2008) as practically the sole comprehensive description of Sheng grammar, do provide descriptive information on the phonological, morphological, and morphosyntactic domains, analyses on syntactic features are clearly limited in both works. Although it may be said that the syntactic uniqueness of Sheng seems less salient than its phonological and morphological aspects, this does not mean that Sheng has no distinctive characteristics at the syntactic level; rather, it displays unique variation, or syntactic fluidity, as may be seen in the following discussion.

This paper thus deals with such syntactic characteristics by focusing on relative clauses (RC). In particular, special attention will be paid to RC with *-enye* ‘having’, which is not only attested in Sheng but in other varieties of CS, however, little attentions have been paid to its linguistic description and analysis.

This paper is organised as follows. In Section 2, a brief summary of previous studies on the processes of grammatical changes in CS will be presented. Section 3 will provide descriptive data of RC in Sheng and in other CS, which show considerable syntactic variation that is not

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<sup>2</sup> With respect of the study of Sheng, Ferrari (2004), Ogechi (2005), Bosire (2006, 2008), Shinagawa (2006, 2007) etc. can be placed in the line of this tradition in that they focused on its structural aspects.

<sup>3</sup> The significant works on Sheng in this approach include Beck (2015) and other works in Nassenstein & Hollington (2015)

<sup>4</sup> The influential works more or less independent of the above mentioned approaches include Spyropoulos (1987), Abdulaziz & Osinde (1997), Githiora (2002), Mbaabu & Nzuka (2003) etc.

precisely explained by the principles proposed by previous studies. Based on these facts, in Section 4, the developmental processes of relativizers that explain the syntactic variation of RC, especially those with *-enye*, will be discussed. Section 5 concludes the paper.

## 2. Principles of grammatical change in Contact Swahili varieties

### 2.1 Simplification and isolation

In the pioneering works on CS, the process of grammatical change has been typically sketched as showing simplification from the grammatical bases provided by ECS or more or less standardised varieties of Swahili (StS). For example, Myers-Scotton (1979: 116) describes the concord system of Nairobi and Kampala Swahili as showing “a simplification of the inflections present in Standard Swahili” with examples of uninflected adjectives such as *baridi mingi* ‘much cold’, *maji mingi* ‘much water’, and *watu mingi* ‘many people’. This kind of “simplified concord”, not only within a NP domain but in other syntactic environments including Subject-Verb agreement, is widely attested in Sheng (Ferrari 2004, Shinagawa 2007, Bosire 2008, among many others) as well as in other CS varieties and has been reported as such<sup>5</sup>.

The “simplification” view of grammatical change in CS is often accompanied by the idea that CS prefers isolating structures rather than the agglutinating structures typical of Bantu languages in general, especially in the context of CS being a contact language and thus having a preference for isolating/analytic structures. In the literature, this “isolation” principle has been adopted to explain RC in CS, as in Myers-Scotton (1979) and De Rooij (1995), further details of which will be mentioned in Sections 3.1.2 and 3.3, respectively.

### 2.2 Complexification as “reintroduction” of indigenous features

While such processes are well evidenced and may even be recognised as general principles of grammatical changes in CS, strikingly contrastive processes have also been reported. Kapanga (1993), for example, presents the following examples<sup>6</sup> to illustrate a complexified aspect of the

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<sup>5</sup> For example in De Rooij (1995: 187) for Shaba Swahili, and in Nassenstein (2015: 79-80) for Kisangani Swahili.

<sup>6</sup> The following abbreviations are used in this paper; 1, 2, 3 etc.: noun class numbers, 1SG, 2PL etc.: person and number, AG: agreement marker, APPL: applicative, CON: connective, COP: copula, CPx: noun class prefix, CS: contact Swahili varieties, EXT: existential (predicate), FUT: future, FV: default final vowel, HAB: habitual, INDP: independent pronoun, INF: infinitive, IMP: imperative, M: middle (for demonstratives), NEG: negation marker, OM: object marker, PASS: passive, PERF: perfect, PFV: perfective POSS: possessive, P(P): Prepositional (Phrase), PPx: pronominal prefix, PRS: present, PST: past, R: remote (for both tenses and demonstratives), RC: relative constructions, RECIP: reciprocal, REL: relative (part of inflectional category), RM: relative marker (affix), RP: relative pronoun, SM: subject marker, SBJV: subjunctive, TAM: Tense, Aspect and Modality, -: affix boundary, ≠: pre-stem boundary of verb, +: word boundary. Glossing and boundary markings of examples from the literature may be replaced with those in this list for consistency.

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TAM system of Shaba Swahili spoken in Katanga province of DRC. As illustrated in (1), high-toned *-áká* (which is distinct from the low-toned *-àkà* meaning habitual as in [1c]) denotes the remoteness of both future and past tenses, which is not inflectionally expressed in StS.

- (1) a. *ni-ri≠kwend-áká*  
 SM<sub>1SG</sub>-PST≠go-R  
 ‘I went (distant past)’
- b. *u-ta≠kwend-áká wapi?*  
 SM<sub>2SG</sub>-FUT≠go-R where  
 ‘Where will you go? (in the distant future)’
- c. *ni-na≠fany-àkà kazi*  
 SM<sub>1SG</sub>-PRS≠do-HAB work  
 ‘I usually work’ (Kapanga 1993: 447-448)

Though its grammatical meaning varies across CS, the use of a suffix reflecting *\*-ag* is itself widely observed. As Beck (2015) points out, the use of *-ang* is quite pervasive in Sheng as well, and as claimed by Kapanga (1993), she also regards this feature as an “innovation” contrasting with the simplification process.

However, it should be noted that this kind of innovation or complexification, which is not limited to the use of *-ang* but includes the introduction of class 12 prefix *ka-*<sup>7</sup> or other various phonological and morphological processes introducing complexities into the grammatical system, can basically be seen as triggered by the contact influence of local languages spoken by CS speakers (cf. Kapanga [*ibid.*: 448] on the possible source of *-aka*<sup>8</sup>), which is called “reintroduction” in Gibson & Marten (2016)<sup>9</sup> in much broader contexts of contact phenomena affecting the configuration of the grammatical structures of currently spoken Bantu languages. Thus, the basic principles affecting grammatical changes in CS proposed so far can be summarised as simplification, isolation, and reintroduction.

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<sup>7</sup> Nurse & Hinnebusch (1993: 346-348) point out that the diminutive function of class 12 has been taken over by class 7 and that the class 12 prefix *ka-* has disappeared in most Swahili dialects.

<sup>8</sup> “As for the source of the suffixes *àkà* [...] and *áká* [...] in Shaba, Lingala in Zaire is the only language (to my knowledge) that uses this prefix [sic.] for both the remote future and past; the other local languages use other linguistic devices. Given the presence of the concepts of habitual and remote actions in local Shabian languages, there was a need for linguistic devices to express them in Swahili.” (Kapanga 1993: 448)

<sup>9</sup> Gibson & Marten (*ibid.*) note that “[m]orphosyntactic innovation in Sheng and across Bantu often shows convergence effects, where structural features are ‘reintroduced’ through language contact.” Note thus that, from the comparative linguistic viewpoint or in terms of structural complexities of indigenous languages, it is not strictly a “complexification” process, as it may reduce the formal differences between the languages in contact.

### 3. Relative constructions in Sheng

#### 3.1 Preliminaries

Before presenting data from Sheng and other CS, I will briefly summarise the basic structures of RC in the following three language varieties; i) StS as a general norm of reference, ii) Kenyan Colloquial Swahili (KCS) spoken in Nairobi of the 1970s (as reported in Myers-Scotton 1979), which can be regarded as providing the historical basis of contemporary Sheng grammar, and iii) a “substrate” language Kikuyu, one of the languages supplying grammatical elements to be “reintroduced” in the course of language contact.

##### 3.1.1 StS/ECS

As summarised in Schadeberg (1989), it is generally understood that StS, whose grammatical basis is adopted from the ECS variety Unguja (G42d), has three structural types of RC as in (2).

- (2) a. *mtu amba-ye a-na#imb-a*  
 1.person RP-RM<sub>1</sub> SM<sub>1</sub>-PRS≠sing-FV  
 ‘one who sings/one who is singing’
- b. *mtu a-na-ye#imb-a*  
 1.person SM<sub>1</sub>-PRS-RM<sub>1</sub>≠sing-FV  
 ‘one who sings/one who is singing’
- c. *mtu a#imb-a=ye*  
 1.person SM<sub>1</sub>≠sing-FV=RM<sub>1</sub>  
 ‘one who sings’

The sentence in (2a) is an example of so-called “*amba-* relative”, an isolating/analytic construction with a relative pronoun *amba-*, which is suffixed by a relative marker (RM) showing noun class agreement with the head noun. The other two take a synthetic structure with a RM either affixed in a pre-stem slot (2b) or cliticized to the verb stem (2c).

##### 3.1.2 KCS

According to Myers-Scotton (1979: 120), in “up-country” Swahili including KCS, two relative strategies were attested; one is the *amba-* construction, which she describes as “in keeping with the favoring of isolating-analytic forms in the up-country variety”, and the other is a construction without a relativizer, i.e., a null marking construction, which is illustrated as in (3).



In summary, there are five strategies of RC attested in Swahili varieties that may influence the grammatical configuration of Sheng, namely i) the *amba-* construction, ii) a synthetic construction with pre-stem RM (RM-V), iii) a synthetic construction with post-stem RM (V=RM), iv) a null construction (Null), and v) an analytic construction with a demonstrative (DEM), among which, Null can be regarded as the result of a “simplification” process, while DEM as having emerged by way of a “reintroduction” process.<sup>11</sup>

### 3.2 Structural variation in relativization strategies in Sheng

#### 3.2.1 Overview

In the data collected from the corpus of Sheng texts investigated in Shinagawa (2007)<sup>12</sup>, at least five relativizing strategies are attested, namely Null, RM-V, V=RM, DEM, and *-enye* as a relative pronoun, of which the two RM strategies are shared with StS, and both Null and DEM are regarded as inheriting KCS structures.

As pointed out in Shinagawa (2007) and shown in Table 1, there are two points to be noted in terms of the distribution of relativizing strategies; one is the absence of *amba-*, which is regarded as a preferable construction in KCS (cf. 3.1.2), and the other is the presence of the StS element *-enye*, which is not a relativizer but a possessive adnominal stem (meaning ‘having’) taking a pre-stem agreement marker and followed by a NP complement. Further syntactic description of *-enye* will be presented in 3.2.4 and Section 4 will be devoted to analysing the mechanisms through which *-enye* was adopted as a relativizer. It should also be noted that there is a clear tendency of structural preference for a pre-stem agreement marker (AG), which will be mentioned again in Section 4.

**Table 1:** Syntactic distribution of RM in a sample Sheng text (based on Shinagawa 2007: 167)

strategy		realization	position of AG
Null		16	-
Marked by	RM-V	19	Pre-stem
	V=RM	2	Post-stem
	DEM	15	Pre-stem
	<i>-enye</i>	10	Pre-stem
	<i>amba-</i>	0	Post-stem

<sup>11</sup> As is widely recognised, DEM is a well attested source of relativizer especially in contact languages (cf. Romaine 1988). For a null strategy, its frequent occurrence (but as a minor/alternative strategy) in pidgin and creole languages has already been pointed out by Michaelis *et al.* (2013).

<sup>12</sup> The text data are collected from the interview article titled “Sheng Interview” cited in a contemporary literary journal *Kwani* (Vol. 3) published in 2005.

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Total	62	
Pre-stem AG	44	
Post-stem AG	2	

In the following, more syntactic details for each construction are presented with examples from the corpus, which contains 683 phrases and sentences in total, out of which sixty-two are identified as relative clauses, and additional online sources collected from interview video clips broadcasted online in January 2017<sup>13</sup>.

### 3.2.2 Null

In our database, there are sixteen tokens of null forms. Though most of them are used as subject relatives (eleven tokens), six of them are the subject of a passivized relative verb as in (6), two of them occur with locative subjects as in (7), and three of them are head nouns with a temporal notion as in (8). Object relatives have not been confirmed.

- (6) *ku-li≠let-w-a*                      *ma-basi*   *i-na≠it-w-a*                      *mang'oro*  
SM<sub>17</sub>-PST≠bring-PASS-FV   6-bus      SM<sub>9</sub>-PRS≠call-PASS-FV   mang'oro  
'The buses called Mang'oro were introduced' [Sheng Interview\_221]

- (7) *i-li≠anz-i-a*                      *BH (Bahati)*   *mahali*  
SM<sub>9</sub>-PST≠start-APPL-FV   BH (Bahati)   16.place  
*pa-na≠it-w-a*                      *Alaska*  
SM<sub>16</sub>-PRS≠call-PASS-FV   Alaska  
'BH (Bahati) was started in the place which is called Alaska' [Sheng Interview\_211]

- (8) *Na≠fikiri-a*                      *ni*   *wakati*   *tu-li≠anz-a*  
SM<sub>1SG</sub>-PRS≠think.APPL-FV   COP   11.time   SM<sub>1PL</sub>-PST≠start-FV  
*ku≠va-a*                      *bellybottom na*   *platforms*  
15≠wear-FV   bellybottom and   platforms  
'I think it was the time when we started to wear bellybottom and platforms' [Sheng Interview\_194]

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<sup>13</sup> The video clips (titled #PesaPersonas) consist of a series of short interviews with Kenyan youths produced by *Well told story*, a communications research and production company based in Nairobi. The company produces the multimedia youth communications platform called *Shujaaz*, whose products include comic books written in Sheng, which are quite popular among Kenyan youths.



### 3.2.3 RM

Contrasted with the tendency of avoiding synthetic structures in KCS as described in Myers-Scotton (1979), RM is well attested in our Sheng corpus. However, its occurrence is rather restricted in terms of both morphological structure and syntactic environment. First, while a number of RM-V forms are observed, V=RM forms seem to be limited to somewhat lexicalised expressions like *wapendanao* ‘those who love each other’ and *vizaji vijazo* ‘the next generation (lit. the generations which come)’<sup>14</sup>. Second, the syntactic property of RM-V is clearly biased in that fourteen out of nineteen tokens are head-internal RC, of which nine are temporal RC, which are functionally equivalent to temporal adverbial clauses as in (9).

- (9) *Hao watu wa-li-po#anz-a*  
 DEM.M<sub>2</sub> 2.person SM<sub>2</sub>-PST-RM<sub>16</sub>#start-FV  
*ku#imb-a wa-li#kuw-a wa-me#pend-an-a*  
 15#sing-FV SM<sub>2</sub>-PST#be-FV SM<sub>2</sub>-PERF#love-RECIP-FV  
 ‘Those guys, when they started to sing, they had loved each other.’ [Sheng Interview\_514]

### 3.2.4 DEM

While DEM is also a frequently used relativizing strategy, its syntactic behaviour is clearly different from the other constructions. First, it is practically the sole stable construction which is used for non-subject relatives (seven out of fifteen cases in the corpus); five cases of object (excluding those possessed by the subject) and oblique relatives are all marked by DEM. The head noun in (10) can be regarded as an external argument (‘about NP’) of the relative verb *ambia* ‘tell’.

- (10) *si hao ni wa-le wa-see*  
 NEG.COP DEM.M<sub>2</sub> COP PP<sub>x2</sub>-DEM.R 2-guy  
*u-li#kuw-a u-na-ni#ambi-a*  
 SM<sub>2SG</sub>-PST#be-FV SM<sub>2SG</sub>-PRS-OM<sub>1SG</sub>#tell-FV  
 ‘Ain’t they the guys you were telling me about?’ [Sheng Interview\_96]

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<sup>14</sup> V=RM forms with the verb stem ‘come’, SM#*ja*-RM, are used frequently as part of (lexicalised) expression meaning ‘next, coming’, such as *mwezi ujao* ‘next month’, *siku zijazo* ‘coming days’ etc. in StS. Taking also into account the fact that the RM =*zo* of *vijazo* does not agree with the noun class of the head noun (*vijavyo* is expected in StS), this phrase may well be seen as part of a lexicalised expression, i.e. not a morphosyntactically productive form.



3.2.5 *-enye*

The most salient syntactic feature of *-enye* RC confirmed in our database is its strong tendency to serve as a subject relativizer (attested in seven out of nine tokens).

- (13) *at least sofar ni-me#pat-a watu kama forty*  
 at least sofar SM<sub>1SG</sub>-PERF#get-FV 2.person like forty  
*w-enye (wao) come kila Sato*  
 PP<sub>X2</sub>-having (INDP<sub>2</sub>) come every Saturday  
 ‘So far, I have about forty people who come every Saturday.’ [#PesaPersonas\_7:10]

- (14) *kwa sababu... I think mimi tu the only person*  
 because... I think INDP<sub>1SG</sub> just the only person  
*mw-enye na#fany-a i-le<sup>15</sup> kitu*  
 PP<sub>X1</sub>-having SM<sub>1SG</sub>.PRS#do-FV PP<sub>X9</sub>-DEM.R 7.thing  
*na#fany-a*  
 SM<sub>1SG</sub>.PRS#do-FV  
 ‘Because, I think I’m the only guy (in the country) who does what I do.’  
 [#PesaPersonas\_8:10]

What should be noted here is that, as observed in (13) and (14), the semantic role of both head nouns can be regarded as agentive, unlike the subject relative use in Null and RM. However, it should be also noted that there are few exceptions attested in both data sources.

- (15) *lakini a#na ny-imbo z-ake mw-enyewe*  
 but SM<sub>1</sub>#be\_with 10-song PP<sub>X10</sub>-POSS<sub>3SG</sub> PP<sub>X1</sub>-self  
*z-enye a-me#andik-a*  
 PP<sub>X10</sub>-having SM<sub>1</sub>-PERF#write-FV  
 ‘But he himself has his own songs he wrote’ [Sheng Interview\_509]
- (16) *lakini kila mtu a=ko na n-jia y-ake*  
 but every 1.person SM<sub>1</sub>=EXT with 9-way PP<sub>X9</sub>-POSS<sub>3SG</sub>  
*y-enye a-na#fuat-a*  
 PP<sub>X9</sub>-having SM<sub>1</sub>-PRS#follow-FV  
 ‘But everyone has his/her own way which s/he follows’<sup>16</sup> [#PesaPersonas\_7:20]

<sup>15</sup> It is also confirmed that DEM *i-le* in (14) is used as an object relative pronoun relativizing the head noun *kitu* which is modified by the relative verb *na#fany-a*.

<sup>16</sup> In the original video clip, this sentence is translated as ‘And everyone chooses his own path.’

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Both head nouns in (15) *ny-imbo* ‘songs’ and (16) *n-jia* ‘way’ are the syntactic object of the relative verbs *a-me#andik-a* ‘he wrote’ and *a-na#fuat-a* ‘s/he follows’, respectively. However, as is clearly shown in the examples, they are syntactically modified by a possessive pronoun and their possessors are the subject of the relative verb. In that sense, the syntactic status of the head nouns in these examples can be regarded as expanded to their possessed elements, i.e., the *-enye* RC tends to take not only the agentive subject but also its possessed element (which occurs less frequently) as its syntactic head noun.

### 3.2.6 Summary of the syntactic features of each strategy

Based on the observations above, the syntactic features of the major relativizing strategies in terms of the syntactic relation between a head noun and its modifying relative verb can be summarised as in Table 2, where the bold lines show the most frequent strategy for each syntactic environment, while the dotted lines indicate that the strategy is attested at least once in the environment in question.

**Table 2:** Focus of occurrence of major strategies in terms of syntactic properties of head nouns<sup>17</sup>

		S-Pa	S-Be	S	A	O-Po	O	Obl	L	T
Null		←	.....	.....					.....	.....
Marked by	RM-V	.....	.....	←	.....				.....	→
	DEM		←	→			←	→	→	
	<i>-enye</i>		.....	←	→	→				

Though it cannot be said that there are strict syntactic rules conditioning the occurrence of each strategy, it nonetheless appears that each strategy has a clear syntactic preference in terms of the grammatical relation assigned to the head noun. The salient features<sup>18</sup> include i) A temporal notion is almost exclusively expressed by RM-V, ii) DEM is solely used for object relatives (excluding objects possessed by the subject of relative verbs, which are expressed by the *-enye* construction), and iii) *-enye* is prominently used for (especially agentive) subject relatives.

<sup>17</sup> Abbreviation of syntactic environments (the head noun’s grammatical relation to a relative verb); S-be: Subject of copulative verb, S-Pa: Subject of passive verb, S: (non-Agentive) Subject, A: Agentive Subject, O-Po: Object possessed by Subject, O: Object, Obl: Oblique, L: Locative, T: Temporal (for L and T, either semantic or syntactic). The number of occurrence of each strategy in each syntactic environment [counted in the corpus based on the text data from the “Sheng Interview”; ambiguous cases are excluded]; S-Pa: Null (5), RM-V (2); S-be: DEM (5), null (1); RM-V (1), *-enye* (1); S: RM-V (4), *-enye* (4), null (3), DEM (2); A: *-enye* (2), RM-V (1); O-Po: *-enye* (1); O: DEM (2); Obl: DEM (3); L: DEM (3), Null (1), RM-V (1); T: RM (9), Null (3).

<sup>18</sup> It might also be added that the coverage of the Null construction overlaps with the other strategies in one way or another.

An explanation of the first feature may at least partly be given by the fact that RM-V with class 16 RM, {SM-TA-*po*≠stem}, is a fixed template of the temporal adverbial (‘when’) clause in StS from which the strategy is adopted. The second finding, as already mentioned in 3.2.4, may well be approached through the syntactic parallels with the topicalized construction, though the full explanation should no doubt be obtained through more systematic investigations. In the following, I will focus on the third point, the emergence and development of the *-enye* relative construction, which is explained neither by the simplification and isolation principles nor by straight-forward application of the reintroduction principle.

### 3.3 *-enye* in other CS

Before discussing the syntactic mechanisms of the *-enye* construction, it would be worth mentioning that relative constructions with *-enye* are widely attested in Congolese Swahili as well. Out of three different varieties of Congo Swahili with a reliable grammatical sketch, namely the varieties spoken in Kisangani (cf. Nassenstein 2015), Kivu (cf. Nassenstein & Bose 2016), and Lubumbashi (cf. Ferrari *et al.* 2014) or as formerly called Shaba/Katanga (cf. De Rooij 1995), only the last one seems to lack the relative *-enye* according to De Rooij’s (1995) grammatical sketch. In all the other varieties<sup>19</sup>, *-enye* has been adopted either i) as a sole means of relativization in the language as in Kivu, or ii) as one of the relativizing strategies coexisting with other relativizers as in Lubumbashi (according to Ferrari *et al. ibid.*)<sup>20</sup> and Kisangani<sup>21</sup>, where *-enye* is used as one of the relativizing strategies together with DEM<sup>22</sup> and Null, all of which seem to be syntactic free variation in both varieties.

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<sup>19</sup> In addition to those three varieties, Bunia Swahili/Ituri Kingwana, another Congolese variety, takes an invariable relative marker *nye*, as in *baba le nye ko ku nyumba* ‘This father who is at home’, *mutu nye miliona* ‘The person I saw’ (Nico Nassenstein, p.c., August 2019).

<sup>20</sup> It is also to be noted that Ferrari *et al.* (2014: 45 footnote 1) point out that in Lubumbashi the RM strategy has been replaced with *-enye*. This may be significant in suggesting a possible process of *-enye*’s grammatical development.

<sup>21</sup> What is interesting here is that the choice of different strategies seems highly dependent on the speakers’ orientation as to how they want to display their own identity. According to Nassenstein (2015: 121), the use of *-enye* forms may evoke “the hearer’s associations with the syntactic form in question [, which] will be prestige, traditionalism and rurality, higher education and pan-(East)-Africanism”, while the use of Null or DEM may be related to “covert prestige (ascribing prestige to a non-Swahili code), urbanism and modernity, potentially also basic education but first and foremost, orientation towards the Lingala-speaking capital Kinshasa (westwards) and its values and world views.”

<sup>22</sup> It should be noted, however, that its word order in both languages is described as NP+DEM, not DEM+NP as in Sheng (see Ferrari [2014: 45] and Nassenstein [2015: 122], also cf. 3.2.4).

#### 4. Syntax of *-enye* RC: Its emergence and development

As summarised in 3.2.6, one of the most salient features of relativization strategies in Sheng is the frequent use of *-enye* as mostly a subject/agentive relativizer, which is not straight-forwardly explained by the principles of grammatical changes proposed so far. In order to account for the linguistic facts of *-enye* relative constructions presented in the previous sections, at least two questions arise.

- i. *Why* has *-enye* been adopted in the grammatical system as a relativizer?
- ii. *How* has *-enye* been developed as a relativizer of the subject (and its possessee) of RC?

##### 4.1 Genesis of *-enye* as a relativizer: Possessive adnominal to relative

A hypothetical answer to the *why* question has already been presented in Shinagawa (2007). As shown in Table 1 in 3.2.1, a structural bias for the prefixal marking of grammatical agreement, which accounts for the preference for *-enye* (as well as RM-V and DEM), and the absence of *amba-*, which is suffixed by AG, is clearly confirmed. In other words, it may be regarded that *amba-* was replaced with *-enye* by this tendency that leads grammatical elements to qualify a consistent prefixal structure.

On the other hand, this explanation is not sufficient to account for the necessity for *-enye* to be introduced as a relativizer. From a general typological point of view, it has been reported that there are a certain number of languages in which some kind of possessive elements have been converted as relativizers (e.g. for Sino-Tibetan languages and other East Asian languages, see Yap & Matthews 2008), suggesting that the grammaticalization process from possessive to relative, or a polysemic relation between them, can be considered part of a general typological tendency. Although Hendery (2012) casts doubt on the direct route from possessive to relative as a grammaticalization process, it might still be said that the two grammatical categories are one of the possible combinations likely to be expressed by the same morpheme.

In the context of Bantu-internal typology, a morphosyntactic interrelation between the two seems more evident. For example, Van der Wal (2015) classifies various relative constructions in Bantu languages into three major types, one of which is characterised by structural parallels with possessive constructions. Typically in such constructions, the associative (or connective), whose canonical function is to link two NPs with a possessive relation, is procliticized onto a relative verb (cf. Van de Velde 2013), as illustrated in (17) from a Coastal Swahili dialect Makwe (G402).

- (17) *vií-nu vy-á=á#yúm-líte*  
 8-thing PP<sub>X8</sub>-CON=SM<sub>1</sub>≠buy-PRS.PFV.REL  
 ‘the things that he has bought’ (Devos [2008: 394], as cited in Van de Velde [2013: 235])

It should be noted that this construction cannot be seen as direct evidence or a defining factor of the introduction of *-enye*, since the syntactic complement of the associative is a possessor NP, while *-enye* takes a possessed object as a complement. However, it is still obvious that the categorical affinity between the two, which may lead a possessive element to be grammaticalised as a relativizer, is widely confirmed in (at least Eastern and Southern) Bantu languages.

#### 4.2 The developmental process of *-enye* RC

The *how* question, on the other hand, may be explained more systematically by hypothesizing the following grammaticalization process, which is motivated by both i) extension<sup>23</sup> of the syntactic category of the complement (from NP via INF to a finite clause (IP)), and ii) extension of the syntactic relation a head noun bears (from Subject to Object and then to Oblique). This process can be simply illustrated as in (18) with controlled examples.

- (18)a. *(mtu) mw-enye kitabu*  
 1.person PP<sub>X1</sub>-having 7.book  
 ‘the person with a book/who has a book’
- b. *(mtu) mw-enye ku#kasirik-a*  
 1.person PP<sub>X1</sub>-having 15#get\_angry-FV  
 ‘the angry man/the person having a rage’
- c. *(mtu) mw-enye a-na#kasirik-a*  
 1.person PP<sub>X1</sub>-having SM<sub>1SG</sub>-PRS#get\_angry-FV  
 ‘the person who is angry’
- d. *(mtu) mw-enye a-na#som-a kitabu*  
 1.person PP<sub>X1</sub>-having SM<sub>1SG</sub>-PRS#read-FV 7.book  
 ‘the person who is reading a book’
- e. *(mtu) mw-enye tu-li-mw#on-a*  
 1.person PP<sub>X1</sub>-having SM<sub>1PL</sub>-PST-OM<sub>1</sub>#see-FV  
 ‘the person whom we saw’

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<sup>23</sup> The term “extension (or context generalization)” is meant to be used as one of the general mechanisms driving a grammaticalization process along with others including “semantic breaching”, “deategorization”, and “phonetic erosion” (cf. e.g. Heine & Kuteva [2002:2]).

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- f. (*mtu*)    *mw-enye*    *tu-li#gomb-an-a*  
 1.person PP<sub>X1</sub>-having SM<sub>1PL</sub>-PST≠quarrel-RECIP-FV  
 (*na=ye*)  
 with=INDP<sub>1</sub>  
 ‘the person with whom we quarrelled’

Example (18a) illustrates a canonical stage, while (18b) is a slightly developed structure in that it takes an infinitive verb form as a complement. Between (18b) and (18c) lies a crucial structural gap in that the latter takes a clausal complement, which is ungrammatical in StS. From (18c) onward, the process is taken over by the syntactic properties of the head noun. Starting from a stative subject (or typically an intransitive subject) in (18c), the construction develops to allow the inclusion of an agentive (or typically transitive) subject as in (18d). Between (18d) and (18e) also lies a critical gap, which Sheng seemingly has not crossed over, in that the latter takes an object NP as a head noun. This construction, however, is clearly attested in the systems of three Congolese varieties as already seen in 3.3. (18f) is a hypothetical extreme, where even an oblique element can be relativized through this construction. This process can be schematised as in Table 3.

**Table 3:** Developmental stages of *-enye* RC (X = a head noun)

stage	structure	type of comp.	X's grammatical relation to its comp
I	X <i>-enye</i> NP[CP <sub>X</sub> -stem]	NP	Possessor
I'	X <i>-enye</i> NP[15/INF-V]	NP	S (Experiencer)
II	X <sub>i</sub> <i>-enye</i> IP[VP[SM <sub>i</sub> ≠V <sub>i</sub> ]]	IP	S
III	X <sub>i</sub> <i>-enye</i> IP[VP[SM <sub>i</sub> ≠V <sub>t</sub> ] NP(O)]	IP	A
IV	X <sub>i</sub> (=possessed by S) <i>-enye</i> IP[VP[SM-(OM <sub>i</sub> )≠V <sub>t</sub> ]]	IP	O-Po
V	X <sub>i</sub> <i>-enye</i> IP[VP[SM-(OM <sub>i</sub> )≠V <sub>t</sub> ]]	IP	O
VI	X <sub>i</sub> <i>-enye</i> IP[VP[SM-OM≠V] <sub>PP</sub> [P+NP <sub>i</sub> ]]	IP	Obl

This developmental process, adding the subject's possessee relative (O-Po) which is practically attested in the corpus as an intermediate stage between subject relative (III) and object relative (V), may support the following suggestions.

First, the emergence of *-enye* as a relativizer can be structurally explained through the expansion of the syntactic categories of its complement (I' to II). Second, according to this developmental scale, *-enye* in Sheng shows a possibility of further development to the next stage (V), which has been reached by Kivu, Kisangani and Lubumbashi varieties. Third, however, the development may well be blocked at least as long as the object relative is stably expressed by the DEM construction. In other words, the stable use of DEM as an object relativizer plays an obstructive role in *-enye*'s development to become a general relativizer (like *amba-* in StS, supposedly DEM in Shaba, *-enye* in Kivu, and both DEM and *-enye* in Kisangani



and Lubumbashi). Finally, if *-enye* can become a sole general relativizer in Sheng, most probably there may be a situation where it coexists with DEM (and RM, which however seems to be less likely to be used as a productive relativizer because of its morphological complexity, or more likely to be lexically crystallised) as syntactic free variation as observed in Kisangani and Lubumbashi. In that sense, at least based on this proposed developmental process, it is suggested that the situation in Kivu can be regarded as a more advanced stage than in Kisangani and Lubumbashi.

## 5. Conclusion

This paper has attempted to describe and analyse structural variation at the syntactic level in Sheng. As first reported in Shinagawa (2007), there is considerable variation in relativizing strategies, which in other words can be seen as “syntactic fluidity” which may be more or less exhibited in any contact variety spoken in a dynamic multilingual situation. This aspect of fluidity, however, is not necessarily to be seen as a random collection of grammatical elements. As shown in 3.2.6, the multiple relativizing strategies adopted in Sheng can be regarded as rather neatly distributed in terms of syntactic regularities. Based on the syntactic distribution, it can be shown how *-enye*, as a pervasive relativizer in CS in general, has developed from a possessive pronominal to a general relativizer. Though this process is intended to be applicable to other CS varieties as well, it is expected to be developed further in light of the linguistic facts yet to be discovered in other varieties spoken in a different social and linguistic situation, which will contribute to our understanding of various dynamic processes that have taken place in currently spoken CS varieties.

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**Materials**

[#PesaPersona]

*Shujaaz* (by *Well Told Story*) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DUGIr6WEI2c&feature=youtu.be&app=desktop> (last accessed on 12-08-2018).

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