

# **IkyaNgonde : a preliminary analysis\***

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## **Introduction**

IkyaNgonde is spoken on the northern shores of Lake Malawi, as far as the River Songwe. Across the border in Tanzania it is spoken mainly in Rungwe and Mbeya districts. According to Bryan (1959:79) the language is variously known as Mombe, Nyikyusa, Sokile or Socile. However, in Tanzania the language is popularly known as IkiNyakyusa while in Malawi it is known as IkyaNgonde. Tew (1950:75) citing Godfrey Wilson, observes that: "in language as well as culture, the Ngonde of Nyasaland [Malawi] are identical with the Nyakyusa of Tanganyika [Tanzania]". Bryan (1959) classifies the language as belonging to the Nyakyusa Single Unit, Guthrie's M31.

This paper's main objective is to present a grammatical sketch of IkyaNgonde. The discussion will necessarily be descriptive since, as far as I can ascertain IkyaNgonde as spoken in Malawi, has not been linguistically described<sup>1</sup>. This preliminary study, it is hoped, will form the basis of more detailed analyses later.

## **Phonology**

### **Vowel phonemes**

IkyaNgonde has a five vowel phoneme system. These are: /i, e, a, o, u/. The vowels are not identical to be cardinal vowels of the IPA since they are less tense.

### **Consonant phonemes**

IkyaNgonde has eighteen consonant phonemes. These are represented on the next page.

**Table 1 : Consonant phonemes**

	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Plosive	p		t		k	
Affricate				ɕ		
Fricative		f	s	ʃ		h
Nasal	β		v		ɣ	
Lateral	m		n	ɲ	ŋ	
Semivowel	w		l	j		

The striking feature of IkyaNgonde, as it can be seen from the table above, is the total absence of voiced plosives and voiced affricates. These do, however, appear in borrowed words such as *dibi* 'dipping tank', *jeki* 'jack', *botolo* 'bottle', *galimoto* 'car' and in prenasalized forms such as /mb/, /nd/, /nʃ/, /ŋg/. In strictly phonemic terms, it would appear that /β/ and /b/, /t/ and /d/, /k/ and /g/, /ɕ/ and /ʃ/ etc. are in complementary distribution, with the [-voice] allophones occurring inter-vocally and word-initially, and with the [+voice] allophones occurring immediately after nasals. Although accurate, the symbolisation afforded by such an interpretation is likely to lead to confusion. Alternatively one would view the prenasalized stops as unit phonemes in their own right to satisfy the demand of economy of description.

**Morphophonemic processes**

There is a complex process of morphophonemic change involving the homorganic nasal in IkyaNgonde. Although this process is particularly important to the noun class prefix of classes 9/10 it does apply more generally in the language. The following is the general outline:

1. N + p = mb
- N + l = nd
- N + c = nʃ
- N + k = ny
- N + b = mb
- N + t = nd
- N + y = nʃ
- N + w = mb
- N + γ = ŋg

## Grammatical outline

### The Noun

IkyaNgonde nouns, like those of other Bantu languages, are divided into noun classes. A noun class is a set of nouns which share (a) morphologically characteristic prefixes affixed to the noun stem, and (b) syntactically, the occurrence of certain associated noun stem sets of concordial affixes that operate the system of grammatical agreement. In IkyaNgonde the controlling prefix consists of two morphemes, the initial vowel (IV) and the Basic Prefix (BP). In certain circumstances only the BP occurs, while elsewhere the full prefix sequence IV-BP occurs. In classes 16-18 (locatives) no IV ever occurs. In these aspects IkyaNgonde is similar to IciNdali (see Kishindo 1998).

The usual canonical shape of the noun prefixes is VCV, but V alone sometimes occurs, as do also shapes Cv, Cw, Cy and C. In certain situations the homorganic nasal, /N/, is an integral part of the noun prefix. At other times the prefix occurs in the shape of a zero element, /Ø/.

With respect to the grammatical number of nouns and their associated prefixes, there are three categories: **singular**, with correlative plurals which have the same meaning as the singular form; **plural** with a correlative singular form; and **neutral**, which has neither correlative plural nor correlative singular forms. Neutral nouns are generally abstract concepts, verbal infinitives and collectives. At certain times, however, neutral nouns appear with an apparent correlative singular or plural but such often exhibit either lexical or connotational distinctions.

On the next page is a table of noun class prefixes in IkyaNgonde for easy reference.

**Table 2 : IkyaNgonde noun class prefixes**

Class No	Prefix	Example	Gloss
1	umu-	umundu	'person'
2	aβa-	aβandu	'persons'
3	umu-	umugunda	'garden'
4	imu-	imigunda	'gardens'
5	ili-	iliyaβo	'cassava'
6	ama-	amayao	'cassava'
7	iki-	ikindu	'thing'
8	ifi-	ifindu	'things'
9	iN	imbombo	'job'
10	iN-	imbombo	'jobs'
11	ulu-	ululasi	'bamboo'
12	ak-	akaya	'village'
13	utu	utwaya	'villages'
14	u-	ulutete	'reed'
15	uku-	ukumanyisya	'to teach/teaching'
16	pa-	panyumba	'at the house'
17	ku-	kunyumba	'to the house'
18	mu-	munyumba	'in the house'

In the discussion that follows the singular/plural forms will be presented as pairs. Class numbers will be provided only in those cases where the singular/plural pair is irregular or derived from another class. The symbol '<' will be used to indicate that a given form is derived from another.

### Classes 1/2

These classes contain personal nouns. These classes embrace kinship terms, names of ethnic groups, professional terms, agents etc. This, of course, does not mean that all personal nouns are found in these two classes. As it will be seen, personal nouns may also occur in some other classes as well (see Creider and Denny 1975).

The singular nouns are recognized by the prefixes /um- umw-/. /umu-/ occurs before all (C)onsonant-commencing stems and /umw-/ before all (V)owel-commencing stems. The plural correlative prefixes are /aβa/ and /aβ-/. /aβa-/ occurs before C-commencing

stems and /aβ-/ before V-commencing stems.

**2. (a) C- commencing stems**

umundu / aβandu 'person / persons'  
umulumyana/aβalumyana 'young boy/boys'  
umulindwana/aβalindwana 'young girl/girls'  
umukasi / aβakasi 'wife / wives'  
umuηgonde / aβaηgonde 'Ngonde person / persons'

**(b) V- commencing stems**

umwana / aβana 'child / children'  
umwipwa / aβipwa 'mother's brother'  
umwalafyale / aβalafyale 'chief / chiefs'  
umwisukulu / aβisukulu 'grandparent / grand parents'

**Classes 3/4**

Nouns in these classes refer in most cases to various entities and elements that characterize the natural world. Apart from the general nature terms, there are also numerous nouns which indicate the specific names of, interalia, trees, shrubs, parts of the body.

The singular prefix is recognized by the morphemes /umu- ~ umw-/. /umu-/ occurs before all C-commencing stems and /umw-/ before all V- commencing stems. The plural prefix is recognized by the morpheme /imi- ~ imy-/. /imi-/ occurs before C-commencing stems and /imy-/ before V-commencing stems.

**3. (a) C- Commencing stems**

umugunda / imigunda 'garden/gardens'  
umulomo / imilomo 'lip / lips'  
umutu / imitu 'head / heads'  
umulala / imilala 'palm tree / trees'  
umusewu / imisewu 'road / roads'

**(b) V- commencing stems**

umwesi / imyesi 'moon/moons' 'menstrual cycle'  
umoyo / imyoyo 'heart / hearts'  
imwaka / imyaka 'year / years'  
umoto / imyoto 'fire / fires'

### Classes 5/6

The nouns of these classes have a broadly miscellaneous significance. They include natural phenomena, names of plants, parts of the body, utensils, implements, etc. The singular prefix is recognized by the morpheme /ili~ ily-/ and its correlative plural is recognized by /ama~ am-/ . /ili-/ occurs before C- commencing stems and /ily-/ occurs before V- commencing stems. /ama-/ occurs before all C- commencing stems and /am-/ before all V-commencing stems.

#### 4. (a) C- Commencing stems

ilikumbulu / amakumbulu	'hoe/hoes'
iliyaβo / amayaβo	'cassava'
ilisiku / amasiku	'day/days'
ilitoki / amatoki	'banana/bananas'
ilifumbi / amafumbi	'egg / eggs'
ilisyu / amasyu	'word / words'

#### (b) V-commencing stems

ilyino / amino	'tooth / teeth'
ilyani / amani	'leaf / leaves'
ilyosi	'smoke'
ilyoto	'ash'

### Classes 7/8

Nouns in these classes have a broadly miscellaneous significance, generally impersonal. They include the names of languages, anatomical terms, utensils, natural phenomena, names of plants etc. The singular is recognized by the prefix /iki ~ ik-/ and the correlative plural by /ifi ~ if-/ . /iki-/ occurs before all C-commencing and /ik-/ before all V-commencing stems. The form /ifi-/ occurs before C-commencing stems and /if-/ before V-commencing ones.

#### 5. (a) C-Commencing stems

ikilombe / ifilombe	'maize'
ikikanda / ifikanda	'skin / skins'
ikindu / ifindu	'thing / things'
ikitundu / ifitundu	'large basket / baskets'
ikiβo / ifiβo	'small basket / baskets'

**(b) V-Commencing stems**

ikyala / ifyala	'fingernails /nails'
IkyaNgonde	'the Ngonde language'

**Classes 9\10**

Although these classes are generally referred to as the animal class since they contain many names of animals, they also include various miscellany, among other things, parts of the body, natural phenomena, implements etc. These classes, are recognized by the prefix /iN-/ both in the singular and plural. The /iN-/ occurs before all stop consonants, affricates, voiced fricatives and semi-vowels in the form of non-syllabic consonant assimilated to the sound it precedes. A complex process of morphophonemic change associated with the occurrence of the homorganic nasal is involved (see section 2.2.2 above).

6.	imbombo	'work'
	inyumba	'house/houses'
	in̩guku	'chicken/chickens'
	inyama	'meat'
	iØsofu	'elephant / elephants'
	in̩gosi	'sheep / sheep'
	in̩gwina	'crocodile / crocodiles'
	inyota	'thirst'
	imbeyu	'seed / seeds'
	injuni	'bird / birds'

It should be noted that, as is common in most Bantu languages, the distinction between nouns of class 9 and those of class 10 is signalled only by the difference in syntactical concord.

**Classes 11/14/15**

**General Observation**

With regard to the classes that have been dealt with up until now, it will be noted that a certain amount of regularity occurs as far as the pairing of singular/plural form is concerned.

In the discussion of the classes that follow, it will be observed that in some cases, the pairing of singular / plural classes is, from a general point of view, rather irregular; it is not as straight forward as was the case with the previous classes. For example, the

pairing of singular/plural forms in some instances does not form a regular pattern in the way that the previous classes did; so if one examines a class such as 11, one often finds that the plural forms are in class 10.

### **Class 11**

Nouns of this class include names of impersonal objects, parts of the body, plants, insects and abstract concepts. The singular prefix, with correlative plurals in class 10, is recognised by the morpheme /ulu- ~ ulw-/. /ulu-/ occurs before C- commencing stems and /ulw-/ occurs before V- commencing stems.

#### **7. (a) C-Commencing stems**

ululasi / indasi	'bamboo / bamboos'
ulugoyi / inḡoyi	'leash / leashes'
uluyuki / injuki	'bee / bees'
ululalo / inyalo	'bridge / bridges'
ululimi / indimi	'tongue / tongues'
ulunyasa / iminyasa	'reedmat / mats'

#### **(b) V-Commencing stems**

ulwelo / inyelo	'net / nets'
ulwanda / inyanda	'belly / bellies'
ulwimbo / inyimbo	'song / songs'
ulwitufyo	'pride'

### **Classes 12/13**

These classes comprise names of miscellaneous entities, modals and diminutives. The singular form is recognized by the prefix morpheme /aka- ~ ak-/. /aka-/ occurs before all C-commencing stems and /ak-/ before all V-commencing stems. The correlative plural form is recognized by the prefix morpheme /utu- ~ utw-/. /utu-/ occurs before C-commencing stems and /utw-/ before V-commencing ones.

The following are examples of miscellaneous entities:

<b>8. (a)</b> akanyoḡo / utunyḡo	'gall bladder / bladders'
akaya / utwaya	'village / villages'
akayilo	'custom'



When the class prefix is primary, manners of action are expressed with the prefix attached to a stem formed from the verb radical with /-il-/ directive extension and a final vowel /-o/. Correlative plurals for such nouns can be either in class 6 or in class 13, depending on the nature of the individual noun.

(b)	akendelo / amendelo	'manner of walking'	(6)
	< ukwenda	'to walk'	
	akasekelo / utusekelo	'way of laughing'	(13)
	< ukuseka	'to laugh'	
	akalimilo / utulumilo	'way of cultivating'	(13)
	< ukulima	'to cultivate'	

The most important use of the class 12 prefix, however, is to express diminution. In such cases, the class prefix occurs as a secondary prefix. The correlative plurals of such nouns are in class 13.

(c)	akana / utwana	'small child / children'
	akalomo / utulomo	'small lip / lips'
	akanjinga / utunjinga	'small bicycle / bicycles'
	akatoki / ututoki	'small banana / bananas'

#### **Class 14**

This class consists mainly of abstract nouns when neutral, and for this reason it is sometimes referred to as the abstract noun class. The nouns, however, have generally miscellaneous significance. The singular prefix is recognized by the morpheme /uβu-/. The plural correlatives are found in class 6. For example

9.	uβoga	'mushroom'
	uβumi	'life'
	uβutoko	'semen'
	uβutuŋgulu	'lies / deceit'
	uβana	'childhood'

#### **Class 15**

The forms which occur in this class are referred to as infinitives. The infinitive is an interesting category in that it has a dual nature: it manifests both nominal and verbal features. By the very nature of their meaning, infinitive forms do not show a distinction between singular/plural. The form of this class is recognized by the morpheme

/uku- ~ ukw-/. /uku-/ occurs before C- commencing stems and /ukw-/ before V- commencing stems.

**10. (a) C- commencing stems**

ukuketa	'to look / looking'
ukuyeta	'to build / building'
ukumanyisya	'to reach / teaching'
ukulalusya	'to ask / asking'

**(b) V- Commencing stems**

ukwisa	'to come / coming'
ukwina	'to enter / entering'
ukwina	'to think / thinking'
ukwima	'to stand / standing'
ukwoga	'to bathe / bathing'
ukwega	'to marry / marrying' (male)
ukwegwa	'to marry / marrying' (female)

**Classes 16/17/18**

**General observation**

These three classes have locative, or adverbial, significance. That they have this significance could bring into question their nominal or noun status. It can indeed be legitimately asked whether these are adverbs or locatives rather than nouns. Nevertheless, words in these classes may function as subjects or objects of sentences. In addition, they may be qualified, and they may also take their own pronouns and demonstratives.

**Class 16**

This class is recognised by the morpheme /pa- ~ p-/. /pa-/ occurs before C- commencing words or stems and /p-/ occurs before V- commencing words or stems.

<b>11.</b>	piŋga	'at the fortress'
	piŋdelo	'at the furnace'
	pa nyumba	'at the house'

This class indicates motion to or from a situation at, on, under, or in proximity to something or someone relatively near the speaker or person addressed.

**Class 17**

This class is recognized by the morpheme prefix /ku- ~ kw-/. /ku-/ occurs before C-commencing words or stems and /kw-/ occurs before V-commencing words or stems.

**12. (a) C- Commencing stems**

kukati	'the inside place'
kusi	'underneath'
kunyumba	'to the house'

**(b) V- Commencing stems**

kwiϕliŋga	'to the fortress'
kwiϕpondelo	'to the furnace'
kwa Mwahimba	'to Mwahimba's place'

This class indicates motion to or from, or situation at or proximity to something or someone relatively distant from speaker and/or the person addressed.

**Class 18**

This class is recognized by the prefix /mu- ~ mw-/. /mu-/ occurs before C- commencing words or stems and /mw-/ occurs before V- commencing words and stems.

**13. (a) C- commencing stems**

mukati	'inside'
mulwanda	'inside the stomach'
munyumba	'inside the house'

**(b) V- commencing stems**

mwiliŋga	'inside the fortress'
mwipondelo	'inside the furnace'
mwa Mwahimba	'inside Mwahimba's place'

This class usually indicates situation inside something, or someone or some place.

## **Agreement**

The nouns in IkyaNgonde, as already pointed out, are placed in particular classes in accordance with two criteria: the BP and the set of agreement prefixes that operate the system of grammatical agreement associated with a particular noun at the syntactic

level. Below I will outline the sets of agreement markers associated with each noun class. To illustrate this I will use a set of paradigms in which only the principal allomorphic variant will be given. Before setting down the table of agreement markers, however, some explanation is in order.

## Verbal agreement

### Subject marker

Nominal control over a verb is indicated by the presence of a subject marker (SM). This appears directly before the tense/aspect (T/A) marker of the verb form. The canonical form of the present tense, for example, is:

14. SM - T/A - Radical - a  
a - ku - βuk - a  
eg umundu akuβuka  
person he/she - going  
'the person is going'

In (14) the SM, *a* is said to agree with the subject noun *umundu*.

### Object marker

In certain situations the nominal object of the predicate is represented in the verbal structure itself by the object marker (OM). This morpheme occurs immediately before the Radical. The canonical form of the present tense with an OM is:

15. SM - T/A - OM - Radical - a  
a - ku - yi - βon - a  
e.g. umulumyana akuyiβona iᅅgwina  
young boy he/she - it - see crocodile  
'The young boy sees it, the crocodile'

In this example the OM, *yi-*, is said to agree with the object *iᅅgwina*.

### Qualificative markers

There are several sets of qualifying nominals that may be generally termed 'qualificative'. Only three will be presented here namely: the Adjective, the Enumerative and the Possessive.

### **The Adjective**

Adjective stems in IkyaNgonde as in ChiChewa and KiSwahili, form a closed set. The list below being practically the complete set.

- |     |          |              |
|-----|----------|--------------|
| 16. | - pimba  | 'short'      |
|     | - tali   | 'long'       |
|     | - sito   | 'heavy'      |
|     | - mwelu  | 'white'      |
|     | - titu   | 'black'      |
|     | - mumu   | 'dry'        |
|     | - kesefu | 'red'        |
|     | - nandi  | 'little/few' |
|     | - wisi   | 'fresh'      |
|     | - nunu   | 'good'       |
|     | - mbibi  | 'bad'        |
|     | - keke   | 'young'      |
|     | - nywamu | 'large'      |

When these stems appear in sentences they show agreement with the noun, for example:

- |         |   |                    |                           |
|---------|---|--------------------|---------------------------|
| 17. (a) | umundu<br>person<br>'The short person is going'   | umpimba<br>short   | akuβuka<br>he/she - going |
| (b)     | aβandu<br>persons<br>'The short people are going' | awapimba<br>short  | βakuβuka<br>they - going  |
| 18. (a) | ikindu<br>thing<br>'a large heavy thing'          | ikinywamu<br>large | kisito<br>heavy           |
| (b)     | ifindu<br>Things<br>'Large heavy things'          | ifinywamu<br>large | fisito<br>heavy           |

### The Enumerative

Syntactically the numerals in IkyaNgonde are used qualificatively, but morphologically they essentially represent a variety of parts of speech. The basis is quinary, typical Bantu roots supplying the forms one to five; beyond that the numerals for six to nine are built up, while ten is represented by a typical Bantu noun. The numerals are: - *mo* 'one' - *wili* 'two', - *tatu* 'three', - *na* 'four', - *hanu* 'five', - *hanu na - mo* 'six' and *kalongo* 'ten'. For example:

- |     |                                     |                  |
|-----|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| 19. | <i>inyumba yimoyene</i>             | 'one house'      |
|     | <i>inyumba siβili</i>               | 'two houses'     |
|     | <i>inyumba sitatu</i>               | 'three houses'   |
|     | <i>amatoki kalongo</i>              | 'ten bananas'    |
|     | <i>amatoki kalongo na limolyeni</i> | 'eleven bananas' |

### The Possessive

The possessive pronouns are stems which agree with nouns by means of an associative prefix *a-*. The possessive stems are as follows:

- *aŋgu* 'mine'
- *ako* 'yours'
- *ake* 'his'
- *itu* 'ours'
- *inu* 'yours'
- *awo* 'theirs'

These possessive stems, of course, match with the various noun classes. For example:

- |         |  |                        |
|---------|--|------------------------|
| 20. (a) | <i>umwana</i><br>child<br>'my child'           | <i>waŋgu</i><br>'mine' |
| (b)     | <i>ilitoki</i><br>banana<br>'his/her banana'   | <i>lyake</i><br>'his'  |
| (c)     | <i>amatoki</i><br>bananas<br>'his/her bananas' | <i>gake</i><br>'his'   |

(d) ikilombe            kitu  
       maize             'our'  
       'our maize'

(e) ifilombe            fyitu  
       maize             'our'  
       'our maize'

**Table 3 : Agreement markers**

In the table below SM = Subject Marker, OM = Object Marker, AdjM = Adjective Marker, Enum = Enumerative Marker and PossM = Possessive Marker.

Class	SM	OM	AdjM	Enum	PossM
1	a-	-mu-	um-	yu-	wa-
2	βa-	-βa-	aβa-	βa-	βa-
3	m-	-m-	um-	wu-	wa-
4	mi-	-mi-	imi-	mi-	ya-
5	i-	-i-	ui-	li-	ly-
6	ma-	-ma-	ama-	ma-	g-
7	ki-	-ki-	iki-	ki-	ky-
8	fi-	-fi-	ifi-	fi-	fy-
9	yi-	-yi-	iN-	yi-	y(a)-
10	si-	-si-	iN-	si-	sy-
11	lu-	-lu-	ulu-	lu-	lw-
12	ka-	-ka-	aka-	ka-	k(a)-
13	tu-	-tu-	utu-	tu-	tw-
14	wu-	wu-	uβu-	wu-	βwz-
15	ku-	ku-	uku-	ku-	kw-
16	pa-	-pa-	pa-	pa-	p-
17	ku-	-ku-	ku-	ku-	kw-
18	mu-	-mu-	mu-	mu-	mw-

## Demonstratives

In IkyaNgonde demonstratives are the basic deictic elements. In the deictic contexts these elements are used to point at a person or an object relative to the speaker and/or hearer and the referent.

IkyaNgonde has three distinct positional types of demonstratives pronouns corresponding to each of the eighteen noun classes. The three positional types have the following significances.

- (i) Set A signifies proximity to the speaker of the person being addressed.
- (ii) Set B indicates the relative distance for the addressee from the speaker.
- (iii) Set C indicates the relative remoteness of the modified nominal from both the speaker and the addressee.

Consider the following examples:

21. Set A	amino aga	'these teeth'
Set B	amino ago	'those teeth'
Set C	amino gala	'those teeth yonder'

The following is the complete paradigm of IkyaNgonde demonstratives.



**Table 4 : IkyaNgonde Demonstratives**

Class	Set A	Set B	Set c
1	uyu	uyo	yula
2	aba	abo	bala
3	uwu	uwo	gula
4	iyi	iyo	yila
5	ili	ilyo	lila
6	aga	ago	gala
7	iki	akyo	kila
8	ifi	ifyo	fila
9	iyi	iyo	yila
10	isi	isho	sila
11	ulu	ulo	lula
12	aka	ako	kala
13	utu	uto	tula
14	uwu	uwo	wula
15	uko	uko	kula
16	apa	apo	pala
17	muno	umo	mula
18	muno	umo	mula

It should be noted that for emotional purposes, to indicate increased distance, the final syllables of demonstratives are lengthened; this is especially the case with forms in Set C, for example, *yila* - *yilaa*, *mula* - *mulaa*.

### The Verb

The verb in IkyaNgonde, as in most Bantu languages, is the most complex structure. It consists of a number of morphemes which in a sense are 'glued' together. It comprises the Radical (RAD) or root as it is sometimes known, and a (possible null) number of suffixes, (ext)ensions and a final vowel (FV), and interlia, the subject marker (SM), tense/aspect marker (TA), and the object marker OM. The structure of a fully inflected verb may, therefore, be represented as follows:

22. (SM)- (T/A)- (OM)- RAD- (Ext) -FV

Some of the above morphemes do not always appear in the verb structure, for example, the SM is not used in imperative forms, and the use of an OM is optional in many cases. The RAD and FV, on the other hand, are an obligatory part of each and every verb.

### The Tenses

The tense division, i.e. the determination of time significance, appear to be five fold. They are the remote past, recent past, present, near future and the distant future. The dividing line for the remote past and recent past is between yesterday and last year. The distinction between the two futures is rather more vague; but generally distant future is applied to that which takes place after today.

### The Present

The present is marked by the absence of any markers. For example, the verb *βuka* 'go' is conjugated as follows:

23.	ηγουβuka	'I go'
	ukuβuka	'he/she goes'
	(o)βuka	'he/she has gone'
	tuβuka	'we go'
	muβuka	'you go'
	βoβuka	'they go'

These forms are negated by the introduction of the morpheme *-tiku* immediately before the root, as follows:

24.	nditikuβuka	'I not go'
	utikuβuka	'you not go'
	(a)itikuβuka	'he/she not go'
	tutikuβuka	'we not go'
	mutikuβuka	'you not go'
	βitiβuka	'they not go'

### The recent past

This tense is marked by the introduction of the suffix *-ile* to the verb root. Using the same verb *βuka* 'go' the verb is conjugated as follows:

25.	naβukile	'I went (recently)'
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waβukile	'you went'
aβukile	'he/she went'
twaβukile	'we went'
mwaβukile	'you went'
βaβukile	'they went'

There are two ways of negating this form either by introducing the morpheme *-ka-* immediately before the radical, or the morpheme *-ta-* in the same position.

26.	ηgakaβukile/ndatiβukile	'I did not go'
	ukaβukile/utaβukile	'you did not go'
	akaβukile/ataβukile	'he/she did not go'
	tukaβukile/tutaβukile	'we did not go'
	mukaβukile/mutaβukile	'you did not go'
	βakaβukile/βataβukile	'they did not go'

#### 4.1.3 The remote past

The remote past is recognized by the morpheme *-ly-* which appears immediately before the radical. For example:

27.	nalyaβukile	'I went (long time ago)'
	ulyaβukile	'you went'
	alyaβukile	'he/she went'
	twalyaβukile	'we went'
	mulyaβukile	'you went'
	βalyaβukile	'they went'

To negate this tense as was the case with the recent past, the morpheme *-ka-* or *-ta-* is introduced immediately before the tense marker *-ly-*

28.	ηgakalyaβukile / ndatalyaβukile	'I did not go'
	ukalyaβukile / utalyaβukile	'you did not go'
	akalyaβukile / atalyaβukile	'he/she did not go'
	tukalyaβukile / tutalyaβukile	'we did not go'
	mukalyaβukile / mutalyaβukile	'you did not go'
	βakalyaβukile / βatalyaβukile	'they did not go'

### The future tenses

The future tenses expresses an action that will take place sometime in the future. They are of two types: the **immediate future** and the **distant future**.

#### The Immediate future

This indicates a slightly more immediate significance than the remote future. It is recognized by the introduction of morpheme *-sa-* immediately before the infinitive form of the verb:

29.     ηgwisakuβuka    'I will go (soon)'  
          usakuβuka        'you will go'  
          isakuβuka        'he/she will go'  
          twisakuβuka     'we will go'  
          mwisakuβuka    'you will go'  
          βasakuβuka     'they will go'

This tense is negated by the introduction of *-ti-* immediately before the tense marker *-sa-*

30.     nditisakuβuka    'I will not go'  
          utisakuβuka    'you will not go'  
          (a)tisakuβuka   'he/she will not go'  
          tutisakuβuka   'we will not go'  
          mutisakuβuka   'you will not go'  
          βatisakuβuka   'they will not go'

#### Distant future

This tense is recognized by the morpheme *-kwisa-* before infinitive form of the verb, for example:

31.     ηgwisakuβuka    'I will go (sometime in future)'  
          ukwisakuβuka   'he/she will go'  
          akwisakuβuka   'he/she will go'  
          tukwisakuβuka   'we will go'  
          mukwisakuβuka   'you will go'  
          βakwisakuβuka   'they will go'

This tense is negated by the introduction of the suffix *-ile*.

32.    ηgwisakuβukile 'I will not go (sometime in the future)  
      ukwisakuβukile 'you will not go'  
      akwisakuβukile 'he/she will not go'  
      tikwisakuβukile 'we will not go'  
      mukwisakuβukile 'you will not go'  
      bakwisakuβukile 'they will not go'

### **Verb extensions**

In IkyaNgonde, like other Bantu languages, verb stems may be inflected in various ways to form derivative verbs. Verb derivatives, are in the main, by suffixal inflection. In this way definite variations of meaning are derived. Each of these suffixes is an extension and a verb root that incorporates such an extension is commonly known as an extended root.<sup>2</sup>

There are several extensions that can be incorporated to a root, and each extension is associated with its own meaning or meanings. Below I will discuss some of the commonest extensions in IkyaNgonde.

### **The passive**

The passive indicates that the subject is acted on by an agent, and carries the same force as does the passive 'voice' in English. The form is recognized by the extension *-w-*. For example:

33        goga        <        gogiwe

34. (a) John    agogile    Mary  
      John    killed    Mary  
      'John killed Mary'

(b) Mary    agogiwe            nu John  
      Mary    killed            by John  
      'John was killed by Mary'

### **The neuter/stative**

The neuter/stative indicates an intransitive state or condition without any special reference to an agent determining that condition. The form is recognized by the suffix *-ek-*. The most salient condition on the affixation of this suffix is that the basic verb be transitive. The immediate syntactic effect of this extension is that the former object of the

base verb becomes the subject and the subject of the base verb does not get expressed at all.<sup>3</sup>

35.    -lya     <     lyeka  
      eat         edible  
      -βona <     βoneka  
      'see'       visible

36. (a) umwana akulya amatoki  
      child   eat    bananas  
      'The child is eating bananas'

(b) amatoki         alyeka  
      bananas       edible  
      'edible bananas'

37. (a) John   aguβona         umwesi  
      John   has - seen     moon  
      'John has seen the moon'

(b) umwesi guβonike  
      'the moon is visible'

### The reciprocal

Verbal roots which incorporate the reciprocal express an action which is carried reciprocally or mutually by agents or participants involved. Invariably, this extension demands that the subject be plural. The reciprocal is recognized by the suffix *-an-*.

38.    koma        <     komanaga  
      'beat'       beat each other  
      manyisya <     manyisyanaga  
      teach        teach each other

39.    aβanafyale     βakomene  
      chiefs         beat each other  
      'The chiefs have beaten each other'

40.    aβalunyana     βamanyisyene

40. aβalunyana βamanyisyene  
young boys teach - each - other  
'The youth have taught each other'

**The causative**

The general significance of the causative form is to 'cause to do, 'make to act', 'cause to be' etc. It indicates that the subject of the verb causes some person or thing to carry out an action or to enter the state that is expressed by the basic root. The causative is realized by suffixing the morpheme *-esh-* to the radical. The effect of this incorporation is to increase the valency of the verbs by one. That is to say, if this extension is incorporated to an intransitive verb, the resultant extended verb will be transitive. For example:

41. (a) gona < gonesha  
'sleep' 'make sleep'
- (b) oma < omesha  
'beat' 'cause to be beaten'
42. (a) umwana wagona  
child sleep  
'The child has slept'
- (b) umukasi wagonesha umwana  
wife cause - to - sleep child  
'The wife has made the child sleep'
43. (a) umwalafyale aoma umwanake  
chief has - beat child - his  
'The chief has beaten his child'
- (b) umwalafyale aomesha umwanake nu  
chief has - beat child - his by  
m'manyisi  
teacher  
'The chief has had his child beaten by the teacher'.

### The applicative

The applicative form of the verb is used to indicate the action when applied on behalf of, or towards, or with regard to some object. The sense of this form is often supplied in English by such prepositions and prepositional phrases as 'for' 'on behalf of' 'to the detriment of' 'towards' 'to'. This form is recognized by the morpheme *-el-*. The effect of this extension is to increase the valence of the verb by one. In other words, syntactically, it has the same effect as the causative.

44. (a) ugoga < gogile  
kill 'kill for'
- (b) upimba < pimbile  
'carry' 'carry for'
45. (a) uMary agoga nimbwa  
Mary has - killed dog  
'Mary has killed a dog'
- (b) uMary amugogile nimbwa umulume wake  
Mary has - killed - for dog husband hers  
'Mary has killed the dog for her husband.'
46. (a) umwana wapimba ifilombe  
child has - carried maize  
'The child has carried maize'
- (b) umwana wamupimbile ifilombe umwalafyale  
child has - carried - for maize chief  
'The child has carried maize for the chief.'

### Orthography

There is no official orthography for IkyaNgonde. The orthography currently used in the Bible is itself not standardized. The tendency has often been to use both the ChiTumbuka and ChiChewa orthography for certain phonemes. Below I present the phonetic value of IkyaNgonde orthographic symbols as used in the Bible.



**Table 5: Phonetic value of IkyaNgonde orthographic symbols**

Grapheme	Phoneme	Example	Gloss
a	/a/	aka [aka]	'this'
b	/b/	boga [βoɣa]	'mushroom'
c	/c/	cibwina [ciβwina]	'hole'
d	/d/	kidono [kidono]	'small'
e	/e/	ena [ena]	'yes'
f	/f/	ifilundi [ifilundi]	'legs'
g	/ɣ/	gusa [ɣusa]	'boast'
i	/i/	ifi [ifi]	'these'
k	/k/	kindu [kindu]	'thing'
l	/l/	libwe [libwe]	'stone'
m	/m/	munda [munda]	'garden'
n	/n/	nimbwa [nimbwa]	'dog'
ng	/ŋg/	inguku [iŋguku]	'chicken'
ng'	/ŋ/	ing'asi [iŋasi]	'sheep'
ny	/j/	nyega [j'eɣa]	'marriage'
o	/o/	olonda [olonda]	'he/she wants'
p	/p/	papa [papa]	'give birth'
s	/s/	singo [siŋgo]	'neck'
sh	/ʃ/	shabala [ʃaβala]	'groundnuts'
t	/t/	tuka [tuka]	'swear'
u	/u/	umwe [umwe]	'you'
v	/v/	vilepa [vilepa]	'fishing nets'
w	/w/	wisi [wisi]	'fresh'
y	/j/	yila [jila]	'that'

### Illustration of IkyaNgonde text

Loli umundu yumo uyu ali yo Anania ingamu, pamopene nunkazi gwake Safira, balinkulisya ikisu kyabo. Umwene alinkutapulako indalama, yope nunkasi alinkusi-manyana; ikiyabo kimo alinkukitwala, alinkukibika mmaka ga batumigwa. Popapo Peteri alinkumbula alinkuti, "Anania, fiki Setano iswile mundumbula yako, ukuti unsiyobege Mbepo Mwikemo, apa kutapulako indalama sya kisu iki gulisyaga?"

## Acts 5, 1-5

### Illustration of IkiNyakyusa text

Lelo alipo jumo umundu, uju ali jo Ananija ingamu; umwene unkasi gwake ali jo Sapi-la. Bo balinkula kimo ikisu kyabo. Loli indalama isi bulaga, syo balinkwitikana nunkasi balinkuti tutapulanye (tubusye simo). Po papo simo Ananija alinkwakubika kumalundi kubapositili. Po papo umwene Petele alinkujoba nagwe alinkuti: "Ananiya, apatile fiki Setano mundumbula syako atile unsyobege Mbepo mwikemo, atile ubusyege simo indalama sya kisu kila gulaga?"

## Acts 5, 1-5

### English translation

(But there was a man named Ananias, who with his wife Sapphira sold some property that belonged to them. But with his wife's agreement he kept part of the money for himself and turned the rest over to the apostles. Peter said to him, "Ananias, why did you let Satan take control of you and make you lie to the Holy Spirit by keeping part of the money you received from the property?")

A comparison of the IkyaNgonde and IkiNyakyusa texts, although shows variations in style and orthography, leaves one in no doubt that the two languages are mutually intelligible.<sup>4</sup>

## Language use

During the Colonial period IkyaNgonde was used as a language of instruction in the junior classes in Karonga. Currently it is officially neither used in the media nor at school. However, in its area of origin it is used as a language of everyday communication. At Karonga town the language is in stiff competition with ChiTumbuka and ChiChewa. Beyond its area of origin it is used among the AβaNgonde as a marker of ethnic identity.

As regards literature there is not much that has been published in the language. The scarcity of literature can be explained by the fact that most of the IkyaNgonde speakers are bilingual; they speak their own language as well as ChiTumbuka, the lingua franca of the northern region. This suggests that if an UmuNgonde is going to publish something in the vernacular, it is likely to be in ChiTumbuka because of desire to reach a wider market.

## Conclusion

This study, as already pointed out, is a preliminary one. It set out simply to describe some grammatical aspects of IkyaNgonde. As a descriptive account, therefore, it has deliberately avoided casting the discussion in any current popular theoretical framework. The more theory-oriented analyses, I believe, are better done when the language terrain is well mapped. The study has, therefore, in an attempt to clear the linguistic terrain, among other things, discussed how the noun class and verb systems operate in IkyaNgonde. It has also briefly presented orthographic and sociolinguistic aspects of the language. It is hoped that this preliminary survey will galvanize interest in this linguistically little known language.

## Notes

- \* Grateful thanks go to M.W. Mwachimba for providing the bulk of the data, Paul Mwaipaya for answering on the spur of the moment questions, Kasweswe Mwaifongo for cross-checking the data and my acquaintances in Karonga who helped with the data during my sojourn there. Responsibility for any shortcomings is mine alone.
- 1. As far as it can be ascertained, the only extant publication in the language is the Bible.
- 2. Extensions have been a fertile source of competing theoretical models such as relational grammar, principles and parameters and lexical mapping theories. For details see Mchombo (1993a) and references cited there.
- 3. The stative is a common construction in Bantu but not a very well understood one. For a detailed discussion see Mchombo (1993b).
- 4. Personal communication with various IciNdali speakers has established that there is no Bible in the said language, however, the IkyaNgonde Bible is used to fill the gap without much difficulty. This suggests that IciNdali and IkyaNgonde are also mutually intelligible. In fact Monica Wilson (1958:28) suggests that IciNdali is a dialect of IkiNyakyusa (IkyaNgonde). My own position is that more research still needs to be done to decide the issue.

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