SUFFIXATION FROM PHONOLOGICAL CHANGE IN CREOLIZED SANGO

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Introduction

01 The most apparent and drastic change is phonological: contractions, more with some words than others.

02 The preposition ti (H tone) 'of' has changed: (a) i (H), (b) t (H on following sonorant: koli t lo 'her husband'), (c) loss of both t and i, with tone moving to preceding and lengthened vowel. The last is called ti-tonalization.

03 'Ti-dropping' is as old as the pidgin, probably inherited from source language: yanga da 'doorway' (mouth house), varying with yanga ti da.

The Grammar of ti

04 With nouns, marks possession and attribution; with verbs, complements: mbi yi ti gwe 'I want to go.'

05 In 1962 there was an average of 1.14 ti's per sentence.

06 The source of ti is Ngbandi-Yakoma.

The Corpus

07 Drawn from 169 of 500 texts recorded in Bangui, 1988. Speakers 2-16 years old.

08 Corpus for study: 1275 'records' (instances where ti could have occurred in noun and verb phrases); 628 from males, 637 from females.

The Analysis

09 Statistics conflate both ti-tonalization and ti-dropping (the latter few in number).

10 By gender: females, 29.67%; males, 27.53%.

11 By age: 2-11 (555 records), 27.38%; 12-16 (649 records), 27.42%.

12 By ethnicity (over 100 records): Banda (175), 33.71%; Manza (133), 30.83%; Yakoma (106), 25.47%; Ngbaka (183), 10.93%.

13 There is at present no explanation for low incidence among Ngbaka.

Explanation

14 Ti-tonalization is recent (last 20 years?) and urban (i.e. Bangui).

15 In 1988 adults were not aware of the phenomenon.

16 Ngbandi, like other Ubangian languages, makes difference between alienable and inalienable possession: fon (L) 'friend,' fon la (LH L) < ala (HL) 'their friend;' afon mbi (HLH M) 'my friends;' afon lo (HLH L) 'his/her friends.'

17 Inalienable nouns -- including 7 pseudo-prepositions -- in Sango (344 records), 32.85%.

18 Kinship terms (behave like inalienable nouns) (206 records), 33.98%

19 French borrowings are also subject to ti-dropping.

Conclusions

20 Ti-dropping occurs about one-third of the time, regardless of age, gender, or type of word.

21 The origin of this phenomenon is problematic.

22 Suffixes developing? biikm (LHM) < bik ti mbi 'my pen.'

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