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Versions of Kituba's origin: Historiography and theory¹

Abstract: Casual explanations and thoughtful ones have been given for the emergence of Kituba, one of the African-based lingua francas of West Central Africa, but there is still no scholarly work that is based on political, historical, anthropological, and linguistic research to account for the language's origin and development. The present contribution is, first, an overview of various attempts at explaining its origin and development. Second, argued and arguable explanations are examined from different perspectives and with data not available before recent research. Finally, the author adds Kituba to his list of African vehicular languages that emerged in the late 19th century, when a significant number of auxiliaries – Africans in the majority, foreign and indigenous ones – solved their communication needs by contriving make-shift idioms that quickly gelled as languages. Still far from the work that will hopefully be accomplished by others, this modest study suggests the kind of historiography and linguistic analysis that will helpfully characterize it.

Keywords: Bantu grammar, Catholic schools, Congolese jargon, language and colonization, pidgin historiography, portage, Scheut missionaries

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¹ An earlier version of this paper profited greatly from a careful reading by Armin Schwegler, Joseph Salomon, John A. Goldsmith (on tone), and two anonymous readers, to whom I am grateful. Too numerous to list are the individuals and organizations who helped me since the beginning of my study of language and colonization in West Central Africa in 1971, but the most important donor was the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. To all: Thank you.

1 Introduction

Having started in the 1970s to account for the origin of Sango, I became convinced that it was linked linguistically and sociolinguistically to a chain of vehicular languages that emerged from contact idioms in western central (or West Central) Africa in the 19th century, citing Bangala-Lingala and “pidginized Kikongo” (more accurately Kikóóngo) (Samarin 1990). A more explicit argument on Kituba’s origin is found in a discussion of ‘Labor and language’ (Samarin 1985: 286–288), followed by a later summary: “The best explanation to date for the origin of Kituba is that it emerged in the contact between the Bakongo people and the foreign workers, first from the east and west coasts, and then from the Upper Congo” (Samarin 1990: 56).² In the present work we continue arguing for a colonial origin on the basis of much more research on Kituba’s history while seriously considering other explanations, which, for reasons given, are found in various ways inadequate.

The beginning of this critical period is summarized as follows. Henry M. Stanley arrives on 9 August 1877 at Boma on his journey across Africa from the east, starts from Boma in 1879 on his expedition eastward into the Congo River basin, and establishes a post at the Pool to become Leopoldville (3 December 1881). The major European nations meet for the Berlin West African Conference from 15 November 1884 to 26 February 1885 to discuss questions connected with the Congo River basin. Its final act declares the region to be neutral, guarantees shipping and trade for all states, abolishes slave trading in the region, and rejects Portugal’s claims to the Congo River estuary, making it possible for the *Etat Indépendant du Congo* (EIC, Congo Free State) to be established. This is accomplished under King Leopold II in 1885, becoming the Belgian Congo in 1908.

In Section 2 we begin with an overview of contemporary Kituba, attestations for and opinions about Kituba over the years, and a typological characterization of it today. In Section 3 ten explanations for Kituba’s origin are summarized. In Section 4 the focus is on the claim that Kituba’s atypical linguistic features are of Bantu origin. In Section 5 we return to a few points already discussed with further comments and critique.

² Readers are asked to consult the originals of my statements about Kituba because mistakes of various kinds occur in citations by others.

2 The Kituba language

2.1 Names for and geographical distribution of the language

Kituba is a lingua franca (synonym for *langue véhiculaire*) that is spoken in parts of the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville, RC), especially at mining centers, where foreign workers are numerous, and along the roads from Brazzaville to Dolisie, Mouyondzi, Mossendjo, and Mayoko. It is also spoken in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Kinshasa, DRC), mostly in the urban centers of Boma, Matadi, Tshiela, Mbanza-Ngugu, in the regions of Kwango and Kwilu (especially in the area of Bandundu – formerly Banningville, 400 km from Kinshasa – in what was the Province de Bas Congo), but also in a part of the “zone” of Ilebo (also Irebu) in Western Kasai (also Kasayi) and Kikwit (Jacquot 1971; Lumwamu 1980: 11).³ A more detailed statement for the RC is the following: “*en dehors des centres urbains importants situés le long des chemins de fer congo océan et Comilog comme Pointe-Noire, Oubomo, Mbayi [or Nkayi] et Brazzaville, [Kituba] est très peu pratiqué, la plupart des campagnards se repliant quotidiennement sur leur langue maternelle*” [‘except for the important urban centers located along the Congo Ocean and Comilog railway lines – like Point-Noire, Oubomo, Mbayi and Brazzaville – [Kituba] is used very little, most of the rural population making daily use of their maternal language’] (Lumwamu 1986: 28, fn 1 and 29, fn 2; see also Vincent 1895: 410; France 1919: 44; maps in Dubreucq 1909 and Jacquot 1971). But the estimates of the number of persons who speak the lingua franca with any competence varies from writer to writer. For a good description of its use see Sesep (1990). For its use in the media see Ntita et al. (2003).

The language has been known by names other than Kituba, such as Fiot (Fiote, etc.), Bula Matadi (‘hit stones,’ used originally by H. M. Stanley), Munukutuba (from *Mono kutuba* ‘I talk’), Kikongo ya Leta (‘Kikongo of the State’), Kikongo-Kituba, and, in the DRC especially, simply, as Kikongo. For a discussion of Kituba’s names see Mufwene (2009a). The name Fiot has been used for one or more varieties of ethnic Kikongo. With respect to all language names, we should remember, the ones used by writers today, as so-called Kimanyanga (for which see Sections 3.4, 3.6, 4.2), are in some cases artifacts of scholarship. We surely have no knowledge of the way the people of the Lower Congo identified languages,

³ The area is named after the river that flows from the south, joining the Kwango that empties into the Kasai River at Bandundu.

as linguists might use the word, in the 1880s and 1890s.⁴ There are, of course, varieties of Kituba, a fact that has to be appreciated in understanding its grammatical history as much as it is in recognizing the difference between vernacular and so-called literary Lingala (Meeuwis 1998, 2001).⁵ For example, what is called Munukutuba is thought to be less complex than other varieties and represents what is most easily and commonly used by West Africans as well as other foreigners (Nsondé 1999: 11; Lumwamu 1986: 31; Jacquot 1989). More recent changes have also undoubtedly taken place in certain places. It is said that since the 1960s at Bandundu, whatever the language may be called, has been evolving into one with verbal prefixes and “particules de modalité du temps” (Hochegger 1981: 12).⁶ This is linguistic evidence, one supposes, of the vernacularization of Kituba in that region, as I have found since the same time in Sango in Bangui (Samarin 1994, 1997).

2.2 Attestations for and opinions about Kituba

There is no documentation for the existence of a “practical language” in the Lower Congo before the 20th century. It is noteworthy as evidence that when Captain J. K. Tuckey undertook a scientific expedition to the Congo River estuary in 1816, one of his objectives was to determine if there were a common language in the region (1818: 386; for a good commentary on this work see Axelson 1970). He found none. Later in that century, when intensive colonization was launched, whites did not mention an idiom that could facilitate their contacts with the indigenous peoples. Catholic missionaries had used ethnic Kikongo over the centuries. Protestant policy also required the use of ethnic languages. One missionary declared, “If we want to teach the Congo tribes we must diligently learn their languages” (T. J. Cromber, *MH* 1885: 327).⁷ When William Holman Bentley began

⁴ Lower Congo (Bas-Congo in French) refers in a general way to a large area including both sides of the Congo River from Stanley (now Malebo) Pool to the coast.

⁵ Vernacular and vernacularization are used in the sense made common by William Labov: something like ‘the variety of language used by most people in most circumstances’ (my words).

⁶ I do not use *evolve* with any theoretical significance, as does Mufwene (2001) and (2009); permutations of this word are frequent also in Aboh and Smith (2009) and Ansaldo (2009). Also in my linguistic lexicon the words *emerge* and *develop* and their derivatives are not synonymous; the second refers to a stage after a new language’s emergence.

⁷ Other abbreviations are the following: ABHS, American Baptist Historical Society; AR, archives; BFBS, British and Foreign Bible Society; *BMM*, *Baptist Missionary Magazine* (Boston: American Baptist Missionary Union); *MCC*, *Les Missions en Chine et au Congo* (Les Missions de Scheut); *MH*, *Missionary Herald* (London: Baptist Missionary Society).

B70	Teke Group
B73b	Laali
B80	Tende-Yanzi Group
B85	Yansi, Yanzi
C30	Bangi-Ntumba Group
C32	Bobangi
H10	Ki Group
H11	Bembe
H12	Vili
H16	Kongo cluster
	H16a South Kongo
	H16b Central Kongo
	H16c Yombe
	H16d West Kongo, Fiote, Kakongo
	H16e Bwende
	H16f Northeast Kongo, Laadi

Fig. 1: Historical classification of Bantu languages allegedly implicated in the history of Kituba, based on Maho 2003.

in 1883 or 1884 to study the variety spoken at San Salvador (now in Angola about 100 km southeast of Matadi), his work was appreciated by other missionaries for the contribution it would make in using other forms of Kikongo. As we see in Section 5.2, Protestant Swedish missionaries were studying another variety. What information we have suggests that the inhabitants of the Lower Congo had been managing with their own varieties of Kikongo and in some cases with regional ethnic Bantu languages before colonization. (For a classification of these languages see Figure 1.) British Baptist missionaries following on the heels of Stanley reported, “Our Kongo dialect has been enough to make us understood among almost all these natives, even at Ntambo [Ntamo, Leopoldville].⁸ There are only a few differences between the Kongo, Kisendi, Kibwende, Kisesa and the Kiwumba languages; it is only among the Batekes that the language spoken at San Salvador becomes insufficient” (Lavaleye 1883: 22, apparently reporting something he had read, without citing the source; my translation from French, see Section 3.8.1 for this ethnic group). Words from the Congolese jargon used along the 1860s (whose existence we assume) reveal mostly only the kinds of errors that foreigners would make in imitating an African language (Jeannest 1883). They are compared in Figure 2 with Kikongo, whose noun-class markers are deleted with adjectives and

⁸ In a “Map of Stanley Pool” Leopoldville is the southernmost spot near the rapids, near Kintamo; Nsasha is further north (*MH*, 1 June 1889, p. 239).

Kikongo	Jargon	Kituba	
-nso	aonso	nyonso	all
mbi	ambi	yimbi	bad
-ndômbe	endombe	ndombi	black
sêsa	s'sese	nsesa	broom
nsusu	susu	nsusu	chicken
-nana	enana	nana	eight
mbija	mbizi	mbisi	fish
embote	mbote	mbote	good
—	iamba	dyamba	hashish
ngulu	iangulu	ngulu	pig
-yingi	inki	mingi	many
-mpa	evwa	yivwa	nine
-nkulu	enkulu	nkulu	old
lunguba	ginguba	nguba	peanut
kinzu	kinzu	kisu	pipe (smoke)
n'singa	muchinga	singa	rope
ndoki	endoke	ndoki	sorcerer
-kûmi	ekumi	kumi	ten
nge	engei	nge	you (2s)

Fig. 2: Contemporary Kituba words (SIL 2004–2006) compared with etyma in Kikongo and the alleged traders' Kikongo jargon.

numbers (Dereau 1957, circumflex indicating a long vowel). We must nonetheless note that George Grenfell reported in 1886, “the Kishi-Congo language does not range so far as this place (the Pool)” (Grenfell AR). (The British Baptist Missionary Society at this time has 23 missionaries in all of the Congo.) This may have been the language of San Salvador. Bentley had a high regard for the language: for its “elaborate and regular grammatical system of speech of such subtlety and exactness of idea, that its daily use is in itself an education” (MH 1888: 196). The silence about a common language (a lingua franca) in the Lower Congo in this period is all the more striking given that so much was written at the same time about the “commercial language” that was coming into existence along the Middle and Upper Congo River, known at first as Bangala. Consider, for example, the following statement: “*Il faudra attendre que le volapuk commercial, en formation le long du cours du fleuve, se soit développé et répandu pour en faire la langue congolaise de l'armée*”⁹ [‘One must wait for the commercial *volapuk*, now coming into existence along the course of the [Congo] River, to develop and spread to make it

⁹ *Volapuk* is the name of an artificial lingua franca created in the 19th century.

the language of the army’] (Buls 1899: 164). One notices that this other Bantu vehicular idiom was not yet “developed,” but it is not clear whether the author is referring to its grammar and lexicon being too simple, or to its not having been ‘reduced to writing,’ as one used to say.

It is perhaps from Bentley that we get our first allusion to what we might well accept as a Kikongo jargon. When he went to the Pool in 1887, he met with the local headman of the Bambunu ethnic group and his entourage several times a day. Even though this person had been to San Salvador and had stayed with the king there, the missionary, already well advanced in the study of the ethnic language, had to resort to a “broken Congo, interspersed with Kiteke” to communicate (*MH* 1887: 359). This may have been the jargon. We get closer to a pidginized Kikongo in the following defense of the New Testament in ethnic Kongo by its translator: “There is no half-way between white man’s Congo and the classic, or rather the *cultured*, style.¹⁰ It is the actual language of the mass of the country, and the style is the style of the natives of Congo. [. . .] All sorts of suggestions have been made. [. . .] others would like it [i.e. Bentley’s translation, WJS] to be simpler, more like State Congo, or the efforts of a new man out [a recent arrival from the United Kingdom (WJS)]! But Dog-Congo is no earthly use for spiritual work; [. . .]” (Mrs. Bentley 1907: 284–285, quoting her husband about 1900, italics in original). Bentley probably was aided with Kiteke by Aaron Sims, a missionary doctor, who had been studying the language and had produced a “vocabulary” (Sims 1886, Sheppard 1917). For more on Kiteke and its speakers see Section 3.8.1. Another attestation might be “their own language” that “many officials” were using with the “small army of Congo” servants at the ‘Boma Hotel’ in February 1893 (Vincent 1895: 402). In 1886, Boma, already the capital of the EIC, has about 120 whites and 2000 blacks, many of them certainly foreigners (Wauters 1890: 194; on Boma see Khonde 2005). For the population of whites in the Lower Congo, namely – the stations at Boma, Matadi, and the Cataracts – and in all of the EIC see Table 1.

Table 1: Number of whites from 1886 to 1900 in the Lower Congo and in all of the Congo Free State, based on Ranieri 1959.

Years	Lower Congo	All of EIC
1886–1890	639	1682
1891–1900	3933	9991

¹⁰ We must not be misled into believing that this is evidence that whites *created* the new version of Kikongo; they were using it because so many others, including blacks, also used it.

This jargon, at least in the form used by whites, was probably the “national idiom,” the language that headmen used in giving instructions to teams of workers during the construction of the railroad to Leopoldville in 1889–1898 (cf. Trouet 1898: 93); see also Section 3.9.1. But the missionary George Grenfell, active for the most part in the Middle and Upper Congo, does not mention a Kikongo lingua franca at all. He probably was referring in 1903 to the language he knew as Bangala in saying that it was “the *lingua franca* of the Congo State,” spoken according to him from Banana Point to the Nile River (Johnston 1969(1): 483; see also van den Berghe (1955: 6), quoting E. de Boeck, writing on 4 September 1902). This might mean, of course, that there was one lingua franca in the whole area or that speakers of the equatorial variety could be found in many places throughout the region being colonized. In any case, it seems that “Chituba”, apparently a variety of Kituba, was used by whites in dealing with the inhabitants of the inland, like the Bushongo; one of the local “lads” at the village of Misumba, according to Emile Torday, spoke it well (Hilton-Simpson 1912: 30, 97, 105). But Hilton-Simpson on Torday’s expedition said “Chikongo” was “the lingua franca of the Lower Congo.” Apparently two names were used of the same language, a fate that befell many languages, like Sango, in the era of exploration and colonization. For other characterizations of Kituba see Table 2.

Even with the passing of years, Kituba in the 1980s did not really have “*une fonction proprement véhiculaire*” [‘the function of a real lingua franca’] in the RC (Ayibite 1983: 14). If this is indeed true, it may explain the assertion that Munukutuba should be dated at about the 1940s (Diener and Maillard 1970, cited by Lumwamu 1986: 37). The use of Kituba, Ayibite claims, at one time implied that one did not know any Kikongo dialect and that one was a foreigner to the region, that one worked for the colonial administration or at least represented the colonizers and white power.

Table 2: Characterizations of Kituba 1900–1951.

1900	“Dog-Congo is no earthly use for spiritual work . . .” (Mrs. Bentley 1907: 284–285, quoting her husband).
1905	In the Kwilu region the Bayanzi, Bahuana (Bahoni), and Bambala “speak amongst themselves a bastard <i>Kikongo</i> [. . .] <i>Kikongo</i> must be considered a hybrid speech, which has grown up from the intercourse between tribe and tribe” (Torday 1905: 135).
1909	Fiote and Swahili are the “Deux dialects commerciaux” of the colony (Bertrand 1909: 74).
1911	Bula Matadi is “a conglomerate dialect, the <i>lingua franca</i> of the Congo State)” (Fraser 1911: 351).
1912	“An acquaintance with Chikongo [“the lingua franca of the Lower Congo”] and Chituba [as used in the Kasai], two bastard languages (both very easy to learn) which serve as a medium for trade between various tribes, will perfectly well enable one to travel in the Kasai district unaccompanied by an interpreter” (Hilton-Simpson 1912: 6).
1921	“Ki-Bula Matadi” (the language of whites in general) of the Lower Congo is “a puny anaemic starveling [. . .] it is simply bad Ki-Kongo with a few words thrown in” (Davies 1921: 102).
1930	The “indigenous commercial language” between the coast and Brazzaville is “Kivili” (Bruehl 1930: 146, original in French).
1943	“ . . . dans leur ministère, les missionnaires ont-ils pris l’habitude de se servir d’un kikongo commercial en usage partout dans la région, mais qui n’a rien de littéraire et possède un vocabulaire pauvre et une syntaxe extrêmement rudimentaire. [. . .] ne mérite pas le nom de langue et est l’équivalent pour le kikongo de ce que nous appelons, pour l’anglais, le <i>petty English</i> !” (Denis 1943: 29). ¹¹
1951	Belgian Congo’s lingua francas are Kikongo, Bangala, Kituba-Kiluba, and Kiswahili (<i>Encyclopédie du Congo Belge</i> , 1951, Vol. 1, p. 90).

11 “ . . . in their work, missionaries have adopted the practice of using a commercial Kikongo spoken everywhere in the region, but which is nowhere near a written language and has a poor vocabulary and extremely rudimentary syntax. [. . .] it doesn’t merit being called a language and is equivalent with respect to Kikongo to what we call, for English, *petty English*!”

2.3 A typological characterization of contemporary Kituba

By any reasonable set of criteria for a type of language that one would consider a pidgin, Kituba might well be assigned to it.¹² And so it has been (Fehderau 1966: 18; Jacquot 1971). Other linguists are averse to calling Kituba a pidgin, preferring creole or PC (an acronym), a category that includes both pidgins and creoles. Even if Kituba is not and has not been a pidgin, one admits, pidginization certainly took place at one time or another in its history (Mufwene 1986: 135; 1987: 2, 11; 1991: 128).¹³ This is to be understood by means of the theory of language change elegantly presented in Mufwene 2001. But one should note that in 1975, at the Conference on Pidgins and Creoles organized by Derek Bickerton, E. B. Woolford (1975) brought to our attention that “There is no reason to assume that change in pidgin, creolizing, or creole languages is any different in kind from ordinary language change.” Mufwene’s view is caught in statements like the following:

- “pidgins and creoles (PC) do not constitute a formal type of their own which sets them apart” (1988: 33);
- they have “no features of their own which may be characterized as pidgin or creole” (1997a: 52; see also 1992: 139);
- “creolization is not a structural process – there are no restructuring processes which are specifically creole” (1997c: 329);
- “the ecological factors and selective restructuring which produced creoles are of the same kind as those which produced ‘normal’ language’ change” (1997c: 324).

In a subsequent work Mufwene acknowledges that at one time he misguidedly used structural arguments alone to conclude that Kituba is a creole (2003: 200). Others, such as Louis-Jean Calvet (1981) and Gabriel Manessy (1995), would put Kituba in the category of vehicular languages, and Burssens (1954) considers them *langues communes*, probably the same. But they do not typologize this type of language on formal linguistic grounds. With a vehicular language, “*ce n’est pas la langue qui importe que la fonction véhiculaire*” [‘it isn’t the language that counts

¹² *Pidgin*, of course, is used in different ways, and a distinction has been made since Samarin 1971 between *pidginization* as a process in different kinds of language phenomena and *pidgins*, one possible consequence of the process. Although I agree that pidgins are “*des lingua franca aux structures réduites par rapport aux langues dont elles sont issues*” [‘*lingua francas* with reduced structures by comparison with the languages from which they have arisen’], I do not agree that they are limited to “*interactions occasionnelles avec les Européens*” [‘occasional interactions with Europeans’] (Mufwene 2005: 11; see also 1989: 77).

¹³ References in this essay to Mufwene’s works are not complete on any topic.

but its vehicular function'] (Calvet 1981: 97). Shaba Swahili also seems to be in this category although it is the outcome “of basically the same processes of language restructuring” as, for example, Kituba. Like other creoles, it differs only because of its ecology – “the exogenous identities” of its developers (Mufwene 2003: 196). (For more on Shaba Swahili see Section 3.8.3, and Samarin 2008 for vehicular languages.) In any case, a recent discussion online by contributors to the *Atlas of Pidgin and Creole Language Structures (APiCS)* revealed how far from consensus linguists are in establishing types of ‘contact languages’. Even the latter term is used with various meanings. The idea that Kituba might or should be called a *koiné*, we might note, was introduced in 1954 in an article by Mwatha Musanji Ngalasso, cited by François Lumwamu in his doctoral thesis of 1986. The latter uses the phrase “*koiné kongo*” as a tentative definition of Munukutuba.

3 Explanations for Kituba's origin

In this section we bethink ourselves of arguments that have been made for a particular understanding of Kituba's origin. The present format has been selected after experimentation with other ones, proving to be more faithful to authors' views. Inconsistencies in the publications of any of the authors are understandably not my responsibility. A critique of some of these opinions is found in Section 5. The headings of the subsections here are in my words.

3.1 Kituba began as a pidgin before the 19th century

This view is adopted by Harold Fehderau in his slim doctoral thesis (1966: 18, 26, 72, 76, 92, 98–99, 100, 103, 110),¹⁴ some of whose views were expressed in Fehderau 1962.¹⁵ He says, “The many facts of history, language, and geography can be accounted for adequately only by the assumption that a Pidgin Kikongo existed before this contact situation [between colonizers and indigenous people in the 1880s, WJS] in the Boma area took place” (1966: 108–109).¹⁶ Kituba's “beginnings”

¹⁴ Fehderau could have been helped by a number of other works that had appeared before 1966. In Samarin (1989a) twenty-two are cited, published between 1886 and 1947, none of which is found in Fehderau (1966).

¹⁵ For recent works on Kituba see Diakifukila (1981); Kiyulu (1979); Makokila (1981); Morrison n.d.; Mufwene (2012); Swartenbroeckx (1973).

¹⁶ The relationship between the factors would seem to be in the reverse: Pidgin Kongo would be accounted for by geography, history, and language.

took place according to him in the late 15th century shortly after the arrival of the Portuguese or between 1500 and 1875 (1966: 99, 103; see also Mufwene 1997b: 198). At this time there was no “pidgin Kikongo” that was used by Portuguese and Africans. It follows that “[T]he Belgians cannot be said to have created the situation that gave rise to Kituba;” but they “gave impetus to the use and spread of Kituba by adopting it for certain levels of administration” (Fehderau 1966: 90).¹⁷ Fehderau changed his position completely when presented with a draft of Samarin (1990), conceding that “I tend to agree with you that it would be more accurate to talk in terms of ‘speech accommodations’ of Bakongo-speaking groups as they communicated with each other in those trading situations [i.e., before colonization], rather than assume that a pidginized form of what became Kituba arose during those years. However, those speech accommodations could very easily have provided a ready base for further use and development of the language when foreign workers came into the area” (personal communication, 22 November 1989, quoted in Samarin 1990: 54, fn 6). This retraction seems to have escaped some who subsequently have expressed opinions about Kituba’s origin (for example, Mufwene 1997b).

3.2 Kikongo was pidginized along the Congolese coast without a pidgin emerging

As an alternative to the view summarized above, one can propose that at the end of the 18th century there had been enough contact along the coast with speakers of Kikongo for jargonizing *practices* (others might say *strategies*) to have developed among the local people and the foreigners dealing with and living among them. The Portuguese, of course, had been there for centuries. The Dutch had been in Africa since the 17th century, but the Lower Congo was not of particular interest to them until later, when they had factories (trading posts) on the coast of Loango, immediately north of the Congo’s estuary (Laveleye 1883: 29, fn). The Nieuwe Afrikaansche Handels-Venootschap (NAHV, the Dutch ‘New African Trading Company’), for example, had been there since 1869. In 1882, at Banana, the free-trade site of several European trading companies, this company had fifty Eu-

¹⁷ It is an error to refer to the colonialists of the initial period as Belgians, unless one means only the enterprise initiated and supported by King Leopold II. The expedition that started up the Congo River in 1879 was led by Stanley, a British citizen and the organization identified by some historians as the Association internationale africaine (AIA), by others Comité d’études africaines, was an international project with exploratory and commercial aims. Its European personnel included Dutch, Scandinavians, French, Germans, Italians, and others.

ropean employees and “colored employees who reached well into four figures,” in fact, about 1000 in 1886, including women and children (Fehderau 1966: 34, citing Weeks 1914: 18). Since some of the foreign workers were West Africans, they probably could jabber in a mish-mash of local languages as they did Portuguese, English, and French (see Section 3.2). But, as noted above, there was apparently no indigenous lingua franca of any kind in the region. It is unfortunate that we cannot yet describe language contact along the whole coast of West Africa. It would be better illuminated if we had a serious description of these coastal trading posts and especially of the nature of the relationships and interactions between all the participants. Some information can be gained, of course, from memoirs like that of Jeannest (1883), who spent four years on the coast, 1869–1873, as an agent for a French company. It is undoubtedly correct to imagine that Kiyombe (now spoken west of Matadi between Matadi and Boma) and Kivili (at one time called Kifioti) – the latter spoken along the coast and in what is now Gabon, allegedly quite different from other varieties – were also “involved in the contact that resulted in Kituba” (Mufwene 1997a: 46).¹⁸ Indeed, the Bavili, at first known as Loangos, may have played an especially significant role, as the following record suggests: “At first [in the beginning of the Baptist missionary work] we had Kroo boys [from West Africa], then Loangos were induced by us for the first time to leave their homes. Other people on the [Congo] river profited by this to engage Loangos, and they became to a large extent the workpeople of the river” (MH 1 December 1887). But Bentley may have been referring only to Protestant missionaries.

3.3 Kikongo, distorted by whites, became a lingua franca

It is said – apparently with respect to the 19th century – that “*les intermédiaires linguistiques*,” presumably interpreters, distorted the language, in this case Kikongo. The people of the Lower Congo then adopted this restructured version of their language, and whites adopted this ‘Africanized’ version (see Section 3.7). “*De ce commerce résulte un processus d’unification des particularismes linguistiques qui ont abouti au munukutuba*” [‘From this commerce arose a process that unified linguistic particularities that resulted in Munukutuba’] (Lumwamu 1986: 31). Although this view seems to be based on allegations made by Father C. Jaffre (1924) and Eliet (1953), it is easily recognized as the old common-sense explanation for the rise of vehicular languages (but known by less appreciative

¹⁸ For 19th century grammars and dictionaries of Fiote see Ussel 1888 and Carrie 1890.

names) in different parts of the world. We must nevertheless recognize that individual whites could indeed be satisfied (more or less, we presume) with conscious simplification. See Section 4.1 for what was called *Congolais* (Congolese).

3.4 Kituba arose among mutually unintelligible varieties of Kikongo

Kituba is said to owe most of its grammar and lexicon to the Kimanyanga dialect because of contact between mutually unintelligible dialects of Kikongo (Mufwene 1991: 129; 2008: 152).¹⁹ Diversity is illustrated simply in Table 3, a comparison of the forms for five verbs in the immediate past indefinite in Kituba (translated ‘I have . . .’) and in five varieties of Kikongo (ordered according to the degree of lexical similarity Fehderau found between them and Kituba). Without providing evidence one writer claims (Lumwamu 1986: 3), on the contrary, that the numerous dialects of Kikongo are mutually intelligible. In discussing this topic, Nsondé (1999) leaves the impression that mutual intelligibility with some varieties is an acquired competence, which we accept as a reasonable explanation.

Table 3: A comparison of the forms for five verbs in the immediate past indefinite in five varieties of Kikongo and Kituba, based on Fehderau 1966.

Languages	<i>hit</i>	<i>throw</i>	<i>see</i>	<i>wash</i>	<i>bathe</i>
Kimanyanga	mbud+idi	ndos+ele	mbw+eni	nsukud+i	ngyobes+e
Kiyombe N	mbudidi	lozidi	mbenini	nsukudi	ngyobisidi
Ladi	ngwindidi	ndosele	mweni	nsukudi	ngyobese
Kisikongo	ngwende	ntubidi	mbwene	nsukwidi	ngyowese
Kintandu	mbudidi	ndosedi	mbweni	nsukwedi	ngyobesi
Kituba	bula	losa	mona	sukula	yobisa

¹⁹ The only ethnic name near Manyanga in a map dated August 1884 is Babwende, immediately north of the village (H. C. Whiteley, *MH*, October 1884, opposite page 366).

3.5 Kituba was created by Bangalas, the population at the equator

Eliet (1953: 108) states without historical argumentation that Kituba was created by Bangala people of the equatorial region and was spread by them to other regions of the Congo. Bangala, we should note, was a pseudo-ethnonym that designated several different ethnolinguistic groups just upriver and downriver of what is now Mankanza, originally called Bangala, then Nouvelle Anvers (see Samarin 1989a).

3.6 Kituba is based on the variety of Kikongo spoken at the trade center of Manyanga

Before whites arrived at the end of the 19th century, traders at Manyanga had “produced a compromise Pidgin Kikongo . . . consisting of the common core of the Kikongo dialects” (Fehderau 1966: 103); it was a “koiné or pidginized form of Kikongo” involving “a fairly severe reduction of the lexicon and of the grammatical patterns of the dialects” (see also Mufwene 1988: 34). This Bantu lingua franca became structurally different because West Africans (also identified simply as “immigrant laborers” and interpreters) used it and shared it with the exogenous Bantu laborers, all the while restructuring or distorting it so that “morphosyntactic impoverishment” resulted. This is the reason that Kituba can be considered a 19th century development (Mufwene 1997b: 194; 2003: 197; see also Kapanga 1993: 453; 2010).

Although the dialect of Manyanga was what one might therefore call the linguistic base of Kituba (see also Section 5.2), other “central” varieties like Kiyombe (near the coast), Kisikongo, and Ladi (Lari, near the Pool) contributed to the language (Fehderau 1966: 98). Mufwene adds Kifioti, Kiladi (Laadi), Kintandu, Kiteke, and Kiyansi (1994a: 101).²⁰ The speakers of Kimanyanga were numerically dominant (Mufwene 1991: 127). A recent list of the Kongo languages with various degrees of relationship is the following, with noun-class prefixes omitted: Beembe, Doondo, Kaamba, Keenge, Koongo, Kunyi, Laadi, Mbata, Mpangou, Ntandu, Nyaanga [perhaps the same as Manyanga], Solongo, Suundi, Vaangala, Vili, Woyo, Yoombe, Zombo. For a map showing the locations of some of these see Nsondé (1999).

²⁰ A distinction must be made between the Lari (Laari), who speak a variety of Kikongo, and Lari (Lali), who are also known as Fumu (Vansina 1973: 11; 124, fn 31; 143, fn 10; 146, fn 21; 304).

3.7 Kituba arose in post-traditional and linguistically diverse centers

One can conjecture, Mufwene suggests, that Kituba's development started in the Lower Congo at colonial posts. These were the *centres extra-coutumiers* ['non-traditional centers'], he continues, consisting of "multilingual indigenous populations forming the overwhelming majorities" that were the beginnings of present-day cities. In these places speakers of local Bantu languages became the linguistic models for the West Africans who had learned the existing lingua franca. But the local people "accommodated the powerful newcomers," as noted above, in learning their [the foreigners'] colonial language variety. This same Bantu-speaking population, more numerous than the foreigners, he suggests, "contributed to shaping it [Kituba] to what it is like today" and "brought the new language closer back to the Bantu patterns" (1997b: 191). This means that "the vernacularization and normalization" of the pidgin (also 'creolization,' quotation marks in original [WJS]) took place outside the Lower Congo in these centers (Mufwene 1993: 134; 1997b: 195). The first such center was Boma near the mouth of the Congo River.²¹ Because it was the first capital of the EIC, it must certainly have been the most linguistically diverse place in the earliest years of colonization in West Central Africa. It had a camp for the training of soldiers. Upstream of Boma, at Vivi, where one took the land route to go further inland, there was another center. In September of 1882 it had about eleven whites and Stanley's African workmen, who included Zanzibaris (*Zanzibarites* in French), Krumen (as they were called), and Kabindas (Liebrechts 1909: 22). These stations were not being established very quickly. In 1885 there were only seven between and including Leopoldville and the Falls. It was only by the first decade of the 20th century – beyond the Lower Congo into the hinterland – that white-centered locales had arisen. Two of them were Dima and Lusambo in the southwestern part of the Congo.²² The latter had what appeared to be an "enormous" population of Africans, each ethnic group settled in separate villages around the Europeans' settlement. The eye-witness reports that there was also "a very large mixed population of natives belonging to no particular village, [. . .] These people are the 'undesirable aliens' who frequent nearly every big center." In addition to these are the riff-raff (*Ruga-Ruga* for the Arabs), who "have produced children of a type as debased as themselves," former slaves, murderers, runaway workmen from facto-

²¹ Tuckey called Mboma "the emporium of the Congo empire, and might be considered as the university for teaching the English language . . ." (1818: 179).

²² On the Luiji River – north of 5°, east of 24° Long – flows into the Lubefu River.

ries, and loose women (Hilton-Simpson 1912: 23–24, 72–74).²³ These unfortunate people could very well have provided a context in which the new *parler* ‘idiom’ was attractive.

3.8 Kituba was influenced by Bantu languages other than Kikongo

Although Kituba “emerged quasi-exclusively from the contacts of the agglutinative Bantu languages” so that Kituba can be treated as “a primarily Bantu contact phenomenon,” repidginization (perhaps meaning restructuration) could have occurred in Bandundu, to which West Africans had spread the lingua franca (Mufwene 1989: 80). Mufwene cites Teke and Yansi in particular for this possibility. We could add Swahili, and in some places there may also have been speakers from what is now Angola and (probably) Natal on the southeast coast, because Zulu and Kaffir are cited by authors for the early years of colonization. We now inform ourselves about these languages.

3.8.1 Teke (Tiyo)

As for the Batekes, they were certainly in contact with Bakongos because of their preoccupation in trade. (For a monograph see Jan Vansina 1973.) In fact, they had the monopoly at the Pool, trading with the neighboring Bobangi, and even having settlements upriver for a little distance (Bailey 1894: 180). But their contacts with Bakongos in the pre-colonial period seem to have been primarily with those in San Salvador (Johnston 1884: 469). A Teke must have known Kikongo, because he was an interpreter for the Protestants on an expedition upriver from the Pool in 1887 (*MH* 1887: 356, 359); he had also served the Dutch trader Antoon Greschoff for a long time (Bentley, *MH* 1887: 359). The latter by this time had had much experience along the coast. At the Arthington mission in the Lower Congo, missionaries were using, in addition to Kikongo, the languages of the Bateke and Bambunu (Bentley, *MH* 1887: 365; A. Sims, *BMM* 75: 395 (1895). Teke men took jobs with whites. They were even porters for Savorgnan de Brazza on his expedition in the middle of 1880 at Francheville (later Franceville), 800 km from the

²³ This work is a personal account of an expedition with Emile Torday and Norman H. Hardy in the south-western portion of the Congo that lasted two years, 1907–1909. See also Torday and Joyce (1907).

coast in what is now Gabon, and again in 1884 (Brunschwig 1966: 17, 253; see also Guillemot 1900: 72; Brazza AR). This surprising information raises questions about the displacement of these people, especially if it were voluntary, but they must be set aside here; however, see Section 3.9.1.

With the Bateke one has to note others who spoke similar dialects, like the Balali, among whom a Catholic mission was established in 1883, because Kiteke, in one linguist's view, is actually a language group with sixteen languages (Jacquot 1971). The Balali traded with the Bateke, bringing them salt, and perhaps more (Coquery-Vidrovitch 1969: 97, 462). They are found on the plateaus north of the Niari River, which flows westward of Brazzaville, in one map located between 4° and 3° latitude south and 12° and 13° longitude in French-occupied territory. They also served whites. There was a large contingent of them in Brazzaville in 1886, and they were recruited by the French for service in the Haut-Oubangui (subsequently Oubangui-Chari, now the Central African Republic), finding themselves in Jean Dybowski's expedition in 1892, when they traded with the locals to get ivory for themselves, working at the French post of Bangui and the Catholic mission of Sainte Famille not far upriver on the Ubangi as well as the mission's steamboat 'Léon XIII' (Largeau AR; Moreau AR; Sallaz 1893: 73).

3.8.2 Yansi (Yanzi)

These people are frequently cited in 19th century reports, where they are related to if not equated with the Bobangi. (In Figure 1 we see that Yansi is now classified as B85 whereas Bobangi as C32.) In physical appearance, in culture, and in language there was, it has been claimed, only one ethnic group that included both. In any case, if Robert Harms is right, the Bobangi did not really constitute an ethnic group that included Yansi and Bobangi (1981, 1983), who had established themselves as the dominant traders on the Congo River, principally in tusks and slaves, dealing with the Bateke. Perhaps the first reference to the Yanzi by a European is that of Stanley. He reports a village at the mouth of the Kwa River on the Congo called Uyanzi. The Wayanzi, as he refers to the inhabitants, go to Lake Leopold to trade (Stanley 1970: 413, 443), not far north of the Kasai River. One of the first of the Belgian officers at this time wrote about "the Kibangi [language] of the Bayanzis and the Irebus" (Coquilhat 1888: 146), and the missionary E. J. Glave, in Lukolela in 1884–1885, was praised for his ability to speak "bayanzi" like a native (Liebrechts 1909: 153). Yanzis came immediately in contact with colonization because they lived along the Congo River, mostly on the left (eastern) bank, from around the mouth of the Kwa River that flows from the east, their largest centers along the Congo being Chumbiri in the south and Bolobo in the north. Sims was

working on their language at Leopoldville early in 1885 (ABHS 86); upriver at Lukolela one missionary at least was learning “Ki-Yansi” (*MH* 1887: 283, 9 March 1887). An active and entrepreneurial people, the Bobangis quickly took advantage of relations with whites, and young men joined the work and military force in large numbers. In 1883 already at Leopoldville a Muyansi (*mu-* being the singular prefix for the noun class) worked as *boy* for one of the Protestant missionaries (Guinness 1890: 366, 378). It is not surprising, therefore, that they soon located themselves in other places in the Congo Free State, noted in 1885 somewhere at the cataracts of the Congo River “below the Pool.” (For other citations see the following: Chapaux 1894: 530; Coquilhat 1888: 132; Deken 1902: 317; Delcommune 1922(1): 217–218, 340–341; Martrin-Donos 1886: 198; George Grenfell, *MH* 1885: 12; Guiral 1889: 242; Johnston 1883: 578; 1884: 469; Lamotte 1894: 85; Liebrechts 1909: 62–64; Samarin 1989; Schynse 1889; for a picture of Bayanzi *bar-reurs* (coxswains or men-at-the-wheel) see Buls 1899.) Bentley predicted that at Kinshasa, these “brave, hardy, and enterprising” people would likely, before long, become “masters of the situation” (*MH* 1887: 359). That their language was understood all over the area in which they traded is convincingly substantiated by numerous published and unpublished citations (Mitteilungen 1887: 170, 173).

There were Bayanzi also for some distance up the Kwa River from the Congo. When Grenfell, the intrepid explorer, undertook an expedition up the Kwa and then the Kasai that flows into it, he reported that he was able to communicate with the people as far as the Kwango River (Grenfell, 22 April 1885, *MH* 1 July 1886). Although he does not name the language (or languages) he used, it was undoubtedly Kiyanzi, because he had been one of the Protestant missionaries among the “Bayansi (Babangi)” in whose language they were publishing at Bolobo (Sims AR; Buls 1899: 178). Yanzis north and south of the Kasai River in 1889 were, in translation, “definitely owners of the land” (Schynse 1889: 15), and those at the confluence of the Kwango and Kwa rivers were alleged to be “among the most successful traders on the [Congo] river,” coming to the Pool and sometimes staying for months (Bentley, *MH* 1884: 255–256; Grenfell, *MH* 1885: 8, 10; Martrin-Donos 1886, 3: 32; Schynse 1889: 9, 36; Sims AR). For locations on the Kwilu River see Myers (1969) [1888]: 68–69; Torday (1905); Hilton-Simpson (1912: 234, 244, 257, 258, 266); DRC (1961).

3.8.3 Swahili

This language was brought to the west coast of the Congo by Zanzibaris, and their role in the creation of Kituba should not be underestimated sociolinguistically.

They first appear as 100 of the original 115 survivors of Stanley's force of 350 men and women from the first trans-continental expedition, who had been left at the coast with his promise that he would take them home on his return. In his absence, one can assume, they learned something of a variety of Kikongo and settled comfortably among the local people. When Stanley returned in 1879 he brought more for the *Comité d'Études du Haut-Congo* for all kinds of work, and many more arrived after that. They also served in large numbers in the *Force Publique* (FP), the indigenous police force or army that was created in 1885 (Samarin 1989a). They were so numerous in many places until the end of the 19th century and their services so varied, that one might just as well select them rather than the local Bantus for having preserved agglutinating structures in Kituba. Swahili was important, or at least useful, enough in 1883 that when H. H. Johnston travelled up the Congo River, he borrowed a Swahili grammar to learn the language (Luwel 1978: 22). Further evidence of the high profile of Zanzibaris in all that whites undertook is the fact that Swahili seems to have been learned by some people along the Congo River in the early years of colonization and that some of its vocabulary was adopted in the emerging lingua francas, both Congolese and Ubangian. And the Zanzibaris were picking up the evolving jargon. One white observer reported that the "head Zanzibari" was put in charge of the Bangala at Leopoldville because "he could speak their language" (Bailey 1894: 206). It is more likely, I believe, that frequently the identity of the *parler* was indeterminable: the locals adopted Swahili and the Zanzibaris 'Bangala' as they spoke.

We should give more thought to Shaba Swahili, for it is recognized as a somewhat grammatically reduced or restructured form of the language, with a disruption of the concord system and a considerable simplification of verbal conjugation, especially in being somewhat analytical (or periphrastic) instead of agglutinative (Le Breton 1936: 22; Polomé 1967: 29), but this idea is rejected in Gilman 1970. It arose, de Rooij believes, when adult members of the indigenous population of the Copper Belt of southeastern Congo – whose principal ethnic languages are Bemba and Luba-Kasai, and recruits from other parts of Bantu-speaking Central Africa (like Songye, Kanyok, and Kete speakers) – learned East Coast Swahili as a 'second language,' with, we assume, some of the restructuring that takes place in such situations (de Rooij 1993, 1995, 1997, 2007; Kapanga 1993). Whereas this must have been true to some extent, also credible is Whiteley's statement (1969: 71) that the (first, apparently) workers who came for employment in the mining industry were people from the northeast, who already spoke such a variant of Swahili. One wonders if some of them might have been speakers of Ubangian and Nilo-Saharan languages in that corner of the world, some of the latter even near the equator.

3.9 Kituba began to emerge in the colonization of the Congo River basin in the 19th century

3.9.1 Displacement of indigenous peoples

Kituba began to emerge when thousands of human beings – men and women; adults, adolescents, and children seven to nine years of age, whites and Africans, who spoke different languages – wanted to communicate with each other in the colonial *tsunami* of the 1880s and 1890s. Without reviewing the well-known facts, political and otherwise, about this period, let us reflect on the monumental movement of populations and imagine the great diversity of the kinds of contact that whites and their foreign (exogenous) auxiliaries and workers (not “escorts”) had with each other and with the endogenous peoples. This aspect of human contact may be suggested in Mufwene 2003, where “immigrant workers” are cited; it was *not* anticipated in the statement, “population displacements are doubtful for Kituba” (Thomason and Kaufman 1988: 196).

In the following two sections we examine displacement with respect to two domains of colonial activity: portage and the military. For foreign Africans in service see Section 3.9.2.

Portage. The transportation of goods through the region inhabited by Kikongo-speaking people to and from the vast interior put them in contact with each other in greater numbers and more intimately than they had ever been. They met and worked with central Africans who spoke Bantu languages from distant regions and with true foreigners of all kinds. Such contact had to be facilitated by the best means practiced by humankind: verbal communication and ultimately, but very quickly, the emergence of a practical language. This is acknowledged by a Congolese author (Anonymous 1982: 4) in writing, “*Le Kituba ou le Kikongo de l’État aurait pour origine le cours inférieur du fleuve Congo, autour de Manianga. . . . Le système de portage de Matadi à Kinshasa et de Pointe-Noire à Brazzaville a contribué au développement du Kituba*” [‘Kituba . . . would appear to have its origin in the lower Congo River, around Manianga. . . . The portage system from Matadi to Kinshasa and from Pointe-Noire to Brazzaville contributed to the development of Kituba’]. Bakongos provided thousands of porters for the two caravan routes. They were frequently referred to as recruits, suggesting that they were volunteer laborers. This is unlikely. Since capitalists were encouraging investment in Africa, they made it attractive by alluding to rich resources in cheap labor easily obtained. (See Figure 3 for the number of indigenous porters on the southern route, and Axelson 1970 and Samarin 1985 for more details on portage.) The local people also had to provide food, firewood, water, and shelter, increasing the varieties of contact in which language was needed; they were the “intermediate

1882–1884	About 40 porters bring supplies to Leopoldville every four weeks.
1883	800 Bakongos are recruited in a day.
1884	Cpt. Alphonse Van Gele recruits 1400 porters at Lukungu in one day. ²⁴
1885	Number of loads is ten times that of 1883.
1886	Camille Coquilhat recruits 800 porters in one day at Lutete.
1887	60,000 porters are used in eight months.
1889	Several thousand young men recruited at Lukungu, Manyanga, and Lutete are porters every month. Bakongos “provide almost all of the porters” for the EIC.
1889	There are 650 skilled workers from Senegal and the Gold Coast.
1890	Total work force is 2000.
1892	540 Chinese arrive.
1892	40,000 porters are used, some caravans consisting of 1000.
1892	4000 to 5000 identity cards have been issued to <i>kapitas</i> (overseers of caravans, bosses).
1893	25,000 porters and ancillary personnel are recruited.
1896	90,000 loads are transported by porters.
1897	Total work force is 7000.
1898	100,000 porters are used in the year.

Fig. 3: Number of porters used on the southern caravan route from the coast to Leopoldville, 1883–1898.

agents between the tribes of the interior and the factories that have been planted on the lower river and the coast” (Wauters 1890: 176).

This intense contact began with Stanley’s expedition from the coast. His goods weighed 78,853 kg (Van Schendel 1932), converted into 1629 loads, representing more or less 30 kg for each porter, 10 kg for children. For the southern (‘Belgian’) route, a distance of 360–400 km to the Pool, about three weeks were required for the arduous and deadly journey, but one cannot be certain how much of this distance each porter had to travel. More astounding than these figures are the records of presumably all exportation from the Congo Free State during the years 1887–1898. The first figure is 4076 metric tons, the one for 1897 is 8722 tons; the total for twelve years 73,194 tons (possibly weight or measurement), an average of 6099.5 per year. Other figures are so great that they defy credibility despite the credible sources, as in Table 4, which is limited to the exportation of rubber and ivory and the importation of rubber at the port of Antwerp/Anvers. During this period of portorage there would also have been the additional transportation

²⁴ Perhaps the same as the recruitment of 1500 workers at Manyanga.

Table 4: Exportation of rubber and ivory from the EIC and importation of rubber in Antwerp in kilograms in 1889–1897 inclusive, based on Mille (1899) (for importation) and Gann and Duignan (1979).

Year (s)	Exportation of Rubber	Exportation of Ivory	Importation of Rubber
1889	131,113	45,252	4,700
1890–1892	361,685	254,873	114,865
1893–1896	473,210	928,354	814,999
1897	662,380	280,117	2,000,000
Totals	1,628,388	1,508,596	2,934,564

1889	There are 650 skilled workers from Senegal and the Gold Coast.
1890	Total work force is 2000.
1892	540 Chinese arrive.
1899	Total work force is 7000.

Fig. 4: Number of workers in the construction of the railway between the coast and Leopoldville.

of every single item by whites in the service of King Leopold and those engaged in commerce, exploration, missionary work, etc. Their loads consisted of equipment and all kinds of supplies: food, wine, medicine, ammunition, and so on. They camped their way to the interior, we must remember. Very quickly whites were supervising the construction of hangars, warehouses, residences, churches, and steamboats by their linguistically diverse personnel. During the construction of the State's railway (1889–1898), there was also a great amount of contact between speakers of various languages (Figure 4). As for caravans and portage in the French zone from Pointe Noire to Brazzaville (Figure 5), we have much less information, but this route must have been used for a longer period of time: until, that is, the French railway was built in 1922–1934, and for some time even after its completion. There would also have been a different mixture of languages among the persons working and living together for “at least” thirty-five days to Brazzaville, a distance of about 500 km (Nsondé 1999: 25).

These numbers reveal the swirling together (a maelstrom) of the people of the Lower Congo, and with them, elbow to elbow in work, were hundreds – if not thousands sometimes – of Africans from abroad and from the interior. Bangalas were involved in the construction of the telegraph line from Boma to the mouth of

1888	Caravans follow each other almost without interruption.
1890–1895	The average per month is 50 caravans and 1160 porters.
1891	May, June, and October: 33, 51, and 34 caravans with about 4124 porters.
1894	Four caravans leave Loango per day in January, a total of 110 caravans and 1622 porters.
1895	From January to the end of August, 5261 porters are used.

Fig. 5: Number of porters and caravans on the northern (French) route, Loango-Brazzaville, 1888–1895.

the Kwa River (1895–1898); they were involved in mounting steamboats at Leopoldville, where “Manyangas” also worked, as noted in Section 3.6. In other words, the still puzzling relationship between Kituba and Lingala began in the earliest years of colonization.²⁵ On this point we must not ignore the fact that Bakongos were being sent in the other direction: to the equator. In 1884 some were at Bangala station interacting with the diverse local population and foreign Africans like the Zanzibaris and ‘Hausas’ (for the latter see 3.9.2). Alphonse Van Gele had Manyanga men with him on his second expedition to the Ubangi River basin in 1891 (Van Gele AR). Very quickly Bakongos were among those who had made themselves “free agents,” as unemployed men seeking work with whites and had even become a nuisance, along with West Africans in the same situation, because a decree was published on 9 April 1897 for the District des Bangalas in the Upper Congo that declared that “vagabonds” and “habitual beggars” from the West Coast and the Lower Congo would be sent to the station at Nouvelle Anvers to work in the fields (De Ryck Papers 2633).

The military. The first indigenous soldiers were ten Bangalas (the first contingent) sent from Bangala station in 1885; 75 or 100 more (second contingent) were sent in 1886 or 1887, and about 80 (third contingent) in 1888, including boys and women (Delcommune 1922(1): 186; Dupont 1889: 30; Flament 1952: 37; Lejeune 1933: 22; Lemaire 1895a: 30). Some of these auxiliaries would have already become familiar with the up-country jargon. In 1890 there were 600–700 of the so-called “indigenous volunteers” in the army of the EIC, and in 1893 Bangalas made up most of the 3500 men in its “armée coloniale” (Wauters 1890: 220, 268; Vincent 1895: 409). In the period of 1892–1900 from the Bangala area alone 5830 men were levied, and cumulatively in the period 1892–1914 a total of 13,701. First recruited and trained at Equateurville (then called Coquilhatville, now Mbandaka) in 1883

²⁵ For a comparison of the two languages see Kahungo (1973).

Table 5: A sample of the numbers of men levied from within the EIC for the *Force Publique* from 1892 to 1903 (inclusive).

Districts	Average #	Average %
Ubangi	302	9.3
Bangala/Mangala	308	9.4
Equator	319	9.8
Kwango	929	28.5
Total	1858	57.0

and at the Bangala station the next year, in 1885 there were 80 at the Stanley Pool station; 45 were taken to Vivi in the Lower Congo in 1886. Bakongos were also put in the militia. By 1888, 2000 men had been trained at Boma for the stations along the Congo River all the way to Stanley Falls (now Kisangani). In 1895 (or earlier) from Matadi and Lukungu 163 were in the *Force Publique*. Twenty-one were sent on a mission to the Upper Uele River when the State was trying to establish its authority in the northeast (Lemaire 1895b: 74). In 1894 the FP comprised 4500 men, and that year Leopold decreed that 3500 men were to be recruited (Axelson 1970: 214; see also Samarin 1989a; Khonde 2005: 115–126). By 1896 there were 4000 or 6000 indigenous “volunteers,” described in these words: “*ce sont des esclaves nègres qui achètent ainsi leur liberté. Dans certains districts, on la [army] tire au sort comme dans la Belgique civilisée*” [‘they are Negro slaves who buy their liberty. In certain districts the military is drawn by lot as in civilized Belgium’] (Wauters 1895: 6). The levies are seen in Table 5, averaging a total of 3262 per year (based on Khonde 2005: 125). As for foreign Africans (Table 6), in 1886 there were about 200 Zanzibari, Hausa, and Elmina (in the Gold Coast, now Ghana) soldiers.

3.9.2 Foreign Africans participate in the origin and development of Kituba

Zanzibaris and West Africans were critical participants in the period we are considering. The Zanzibaris – East Africans, and not just men from the island of Zanzibar – served only the Congo Free State. From 1886 until 1893, 547 Zanzibaris worked on the railway, and in 1891 a contract was made with Tippu Tip – the powerful colonialist Arab trader from the east – for providing 2600 workers, of whom 800 were to be women, and all of whom, presumably, would have been

speakers of Bantu languages (Samarin 1989a: 43, 104). Although they must certainly have taken part in the creation of Kituba as well as Bangala and Sango, we ignore them because as speakers of Bantu languages, Swahili among them, they probably were not innovators in the adoption of an isolating verbal system (for which see 5.1).

West Africans. Fehderau brings these foreigners into the history of the Kituba only after its origin. This was, according to him, when they came from Senegal, the Gold Coast, Dahomey, and Sierra Leone for the construction of the railway to Leopoldville. Mufwene is more explicit. According to him, West Africans contributed to making the lingua franca structurally different from what it had been. So one can say that Kituba was “born from the original attempts of the West Africans to communicate with the indigenes” in the pidginized lingua franca; they might indeed be called Kituba’s “initiators,” because they played the “trigger role” in Kituba’s “development” and “formation” as a new language. Their version of the lingua franca, however, was adapted to the one used by “the Bantus,” who became their “models”. Because what was spoken by West Africans had a certain prestige among the local inhabitants, they spoke the idiom to accommodate “the powerful foreigners”. Subsequently West Africans spread the lingua franca geographically in Bandundu, where it could have been “repidginized and creolized”. (For this paragraph see Mufwene 1997b: 191, 194 fn 19, 196, 198.)

West Africans were already on the Congolese coast when the Zanzibaris arrived, serving whites: explorers, officials, merchants, missionaries, travelers of all nationalities. Some West African languages belong to the Kwa linguistic family (the classification is still under discussion). Its members are found over a distance of about 800 km along the coast, in Côte d’Ivoire (Ivory Coast), Ghana, Togo, and Benin, and inland for about 250 km (Stewart 1989, including a map). There may also have been languages of other families, like Mande, Gur, Dogon, and especially Benue-Congo on both sides and up the Niger River in Nigeria, the vast area from which so-called ‘Hausas’ came. The latter were almost certainly former slaves who were brought to Lagos and other places on the Coast of Guinea by Hausa traders (Tuckey 1818: xv–xvi). For their numbers in Central Africa see Figure 6. An analysis of the Senegalese personnel of Casimir Maistre’s expedition in the Haut-Oubangui in 1892, by way of example, reveals the numbers (in parentheses) of the West Africans and their ethnolinguistic traits: Fula (10), Serer (2), Temne (2), Wolof (8), Bambara (4), Soninke, Susu-Dialonke (3), Malinke-Sose (1), Sarakole (8), and Khasonke (1), Kru (11), Basa, and Vai (30 or 50), Kasai (30) (Maistre AR; Maistre 1895; Samarin 1982b: 417). These might be assigned to the following Niger-Congo languages (Bendor-Samuel 1989, ignoring subsequent revisions): *Atlantic*, Northern (Fula, Wolof, Serer), Southern (Temne); *Mande*, Northwestern (Susu), Northern (Bambara, Malinke).

1883	Hausas help build the Equator station on the Congo River (Martrin-Donos 1889, vol. 3, p. 209).
1886	In August, at Boma there are soldiers from Lagos (Dupont 1889: 30).
—	In September, 40 are among the armed men of the EIC (Le Jeune 1933: 199 fn).
1887	A company of 100 Hausa soldiers are among the 500 at Boma dressed in Brandenburg blue (Wauters 1890: 194; Flament 1952: 39).
1888	Hausa soldiers are among the Basoko people on the Upper Congo (Salmon 1978: 82).
1889	Hausas are in Van Gele's expedition up the Ubangi River (Van Gele AR).
1889	Hausa soldiers are at Bangala (Wauters 1890: 238).
1890	Hausas are among the 150 soldiers on board the steamboat 'Stanley' going up the Congo River (Michaux 1907: 89).
1894	A military expedition arrives at Boma on 20 January headed for Bangassou (now in the Central African Republic) with 150 Hausas and 200 Zanzibaris (Janssens and Cateaux 1911(2): 520–521).

Fig. 6: So-called Hausas serving in Central Africa, 1883–1894.

Table 6: The numbers of foreign Africans recruited for the *Force Publique* of the EIC, 1883–1901, based on Samarin 1989: 44 and Khonde 2005: 119.

Origins	Numbers	Percentages
North East	850	6.8%
Zanzibar	1,775	14.3%
West Coast	9,827	78.9%
Totals	12,452	100%

Both Zanzibaris and West Africans must have contributed to Kituba's history as members of the infamous *Force Publique* (Table 6). Between 1888 and 1896 inclusive, of the 1775 Zanzibaris recruited (14.2 per cent of the total), 1760 (99.2 per cent) of them were recruited over nine years in five detachments. Of the West Coast Africans 3040 (30.9 per cent) were recruited between 1883 and 1890 and 6787 (69.1 per cent) between 1891 and 1901 (years are inclusive). Of all these West Africans, 5585 (56.9 per cent) were Hausas constituting 44.9 per cent of all foreign recruits and 2745 (27.9 per cent) from Sierra Leone. Of the Hausas 96.7 per cent were recruited during the thirteen-year period of 1887–1899. In this table 'North East' represents Egypt, Somalia, Abyssinia; Zanzibar is used for both the island

and the mainland; West Coast stands for Sierra Leone, Liberia, Accra (Gold Coast), Dahomey, Hausa (Nigeria).

Although I attribute a role to West Africans in the creation of the jargon that evolved into Kituba, I have never argued that they were *responsible* for its isolating features, only that “All of these [foreigners] could have introduced isolating features to the language they were creating” (Samarin 1990: 57; 1982a: 32; but see Mufwene 1993: 134). Every foreigner whose language was characterized by isolating morphosyntax, not just West Africans (and certainly not just those who spoke Kwa languages), could have contributed. Everyone thrown together at this time in Central Africa needed some verbal means of communicating with others for moments, hours, days, or longer. Some of them came with experience with jargons and lingua francas in their own regions. One of these, as noted above, was Swahili brought by the Zanzibaris, some of whom would have spoken it poorly, possibly in a reduced form, and one or two regional West African languages may have been involved. One of these seems to have been Vai. It was used, according to one report in 1868, for “general communication” in the interior beyond Liberia (Anderson 1971: 39; see also J. Sims 2003). Speakers of Vai were certainly among the West African workers, as noted above. Krumen or Krubois are frequently cited in the reports of travelers in the Congo area. Jeannest, mentioned above, provides information on the numbers of Kru at several European factories and on their work as laborers, trading assistants, guards, and so forth. As so many did in those days, they took advantage of their connections with whites by using some of their salaries for merchandise with which to carry on their own business in trade (Coquilhat 1886: 29). For more information on these West Africans see the appendix. The ‘Kaffirs’ (also called Zulus), may have arrived in the Lower Congo familiar with some form of Fanakalo. The numbers of foreigners increased rapidly and spread into other areas. Deep in the hinterland in the early 1900s most of the clerks, mechanics, and carpenters “come from the coast, the majority of them from Sierra Leone, Lagos, or Accra” (Hilton-Simpson 1912: 23; for a general study see Martin 1982).

3.10 Kituba was arguably spread by children

The State decreed the establishment of schools in 1890, the first ones being at Moanda (8 km from Banana), Boma, and Nouvelle Anvers. These may have been turned over in 1892 to Catholic missions when their educational system was approved by the government and may have become the only official one.²⁶ In any

²⁶ Of Protestant ones nothing has been found in various archives.

case, in 1892 there were already 500 children at the mission school at Nouvelle Anvers (MCC 1892: 207). It is clear that at the very outset, Catholic missionary work concentrated on children, *enfants*, frequently babies but youth of all ages, even adolescents. The missionaries' goal, of course, was to lead them into the church while civilizing them. Children, set to certain tasks (as domestic servants, in the workshops, and on plantations), were to become an entirely different kind of human being from what their parents were: lazy and undisciplined. The young scholars – and workers, it turned out – were acquired in many ways: some would have come from the immediate neighborhoods; others had been captives handed over to the missions by the State and slaves ransomed by the missionaries. 'Captives' were people of all ages from dissident villages, whose inhabitants refused to submit to the State's authority or did so without satisfying the demands put on them; the children were frequently referred to as orphans. The government's contract with the Church required that the youth remain its wards, while subjecting boys to three hours of military instruction and training a day in addition to other kinds of education and work. In early adolescence four-fifths of them were returned to the State to be further trained for the militia, some to become workers and craftsmen for the State's stations, others remaining at the mission and under its authority until the age of twenty-five (Denis 1943: 57). Schools prospered with large numbers of children. Scheut missionaries, for example, "collected" 9237 slaves and orphans at Luluaburg alone between 1888 and 1898.²⁷ Around 1891 this mission had 50 hectares (124 acres) under cultivation, of which 62 acres were in manioc, 15 in rice, 15 in beans, 15 in corn, and three in bananas. In 1896 there were about 5000 children in 40 Catholic schools – at Mpese there were 800 pupils eight years old and younger, and in 1904 there were 75 primary schools.

Because the State took the young people for its own needs whenever it wanted, missionaries created chapel farms (*fermes-chapelles*) to continue their influence over them. These consisted of pupils (from 100 to 300 in number, sometimes just three years old) who were gathered from villages in the region (Dom [1924]: 72–77; Thibaut 1911). They were indeed farms supervised by a young man of about twenty years of age, who was supposed to direct manual labor, teach classes, read prayers, etc. These places were supposed to be financially viable communities. Along the Kwango and Kwilu rivers, where Kituba was spreading, children cut and sold wood for the Credit Commercial Company's steamers, and they also sold baskets they made to villagers who were being forced to collect rubber sap. In 1902 there were 250 such farms, with about 5000 children, in 1904 528,

²⁷ The Congrégation de Scheut was based in Belgium, and its missionary priests were called Pères de Scheut or Scheutistes. The vicariat for the Congo was established in 1888.

and in 1909 about a thousand (Samarin 1989a: 184). Along the Kasai, Kwango, Kwilu, and Inzia rivers there were eighteen “*magnifiques fermes-chapelles*” (Pierpont 1906: 35). The one at the Kisantu mission, established in 1894 about thirty miles south of Leopoldville, was the model and inspiration of Catholic missionaries. In 1906 it had 500 blacks in its care and 250 acres under cultivation: 68 in manioc, 37 in rice, 34 in banana trees, and the rest in sweet potatoes, sorghum, corn, peanuts, beans, sugar cane, vegetables, rubber, eucalyptus, and grazing for oxen; and it had 50 pigs and 300 chickens. It is no wonder that these centers were called colonies: *école-colonie*, *colonie scolaire*, *colonie d’enfants*, or *colonies indigènes*. Children were to become colonists themselves, because the State’s administration anticipated the growth of detribalized villages, populated by men and women who had been ‘civilized’ toward a new way of life; marriages would be arranged when the children were old enough and sent out on their own as representatives of the administration. The communities of children and young people just described – as well as the whites and adult blacks who supervised them – must surely have constituted *foyers* for the spread of Kituba throughout a large region. If the language did not become the dominant one for these Congolese, it must have been an important one for them along with an ethnic language learned in childhood. The language itself, must have experienced change in their midst.

4 Explanations for Kituba’s linguistic features

Compared to any of the several Bantu languages and dialects belonging to the Kikongo group or language cluster, every variety of Kituba bears evidence of the kind of reduction (simplification) and restructuration or reconstruction that occur with what has been called pidginization. These terms, one must understand in reading the literature on language contact and change, vary in meaning. For the use of ‘simplification,’ a thorn in the flesh of linguistics, one might cite from three decades ago the following: “The processes by which pidgins and creoles develop involve generalizations of syntactic rules and simplification of constraints on their application” (Berdan 1975; among many others for this topic see also Gilman 1979: 102; Foley 1988: 162, 165, 166, 172, 175). Currently John McWhorter (2008: 292) is most frequently cited: “creole genesis entails radical simplification of the grammars of the source languages,” which resembles Mufwene’s acknowledgement that creoles “regularize or simplify the morphologies of their lexifiers.” Elsewhere it is said, as noted above, that the changes constitute only a “restructuring”, illustrated in Kituba by just “a shift from a predominantly morphological system [...] to a predominantly analytical one,” also described

as a “tendency toward an isolating morphosyntax” (Mufwene 1993: 134; 1988: 40, 47).

In this section we take a look at some of the linguistic consequences of the emergence of a new language based on an old one.

4.1 Kituba's features are characteristic of pidginization

Whatever words a linguist uses from his or her theoretical perspective, everyone must recognize that Kituba has, with reasonable argumentation, the following linguistic features that are characterized as pidginization.

- a. It has a reduced lexicon.
- b. It arguably has lost the formal use of tone in lexicon and grammar.
- c. Its verbal and nominal grammars are reduced by comparison with the complex systems of co-territorial Bantu languages.
- d. Despite its Bantu ancestry its morphosyntax is analytic or isolating rather than synthetic or agglutinating.

This view was adopted by Fehderau, who uses the words pidgin, pidginized, pidginization, and Pidgin Kikongo in discussing Kituba (1966: 18, 22, 98–99, 100, 103).

Ayibite also does not hedge his characterization of the linguistic processes that Kikongo went through in becoming Kituba, as does Sumbu (1988) and Mufwene *passim*; but the latter refers to “tone leveling” instead of loss of tone (1991: 138). For the loss of contrastive tone and vowel length in Kituba Ayibite gives this example: Kimanyanga **kubéla** ‘be cooked’ and **kubééla** ‘be sick’ > Kituba **kubela** ‘be cooked’ and ‘be sick.’ But we should note that this particular contrast is not confirmed in SIL’s dictionary. Here we find **-beela** ‘be sick’ and **-bela** ‘to hate,’ contrasted by vowel length with the predictable high pitch on the penultimate syllable, and no word for ‘be cooked’. The analysis of Fehderau, whose work may be the first by someone trained in modern linguistics, is different. According to him lexical pitch occurs with the penultimate syllable (predictably, we might add), “especially when the word occurs in isolation or before a pause in speech.” It is stress that is distinctive, here indicated with ('). Ignoring various kinds of utterances, the following pair is sufficient: **'beto 'lenda ku'sala** ‘we can work’ (word-for-word gloss) vs **'beto le'nda ku'sala** ‘we were able to work’. It follows that both stress and pitch can occur in a word (raised pitch here with acute accent over a vowel), as in **'bakála** ‘men’, **bi'ngána** ‘fables’ and **'yandi 'kele ku'sadisa** ‘he is helping’ (Fehderau 1962: 6). In the latter, clause pitch is level until the syllable **dí**, when it rises and then drops. For more on this topic see Section 5.3.

With respect to “external simplification” Ayibite lists: “*la prédomination de l’expression analytique sur l’expression synthétique*” [‘the predominance of analytic over synthetic expression’] and the regularization and elimination of redundancy (1983: 17); and he compares examples of verbal and nominal forms of Kituba with similar ones in Kimanyanga, Kintandu, Kiyombe, and Kindibu, based, apparently, on field work. He shows how verbs in Kituba are deprived of personal and noun-class subject prefixes (Table 7) and that agreement with the reduced noun-classes – such as the qualifying adjective, the demonstrative, the connective for ‘of’, the possessive, indefinite and definite, and numerals – no longer exists. Although his table includes noun classes 13 and 17, Deborah Buchanan (1996/97) says that Proto-Bantu classes 13, 16, 17, and 18 have been lost in Kituba. One also finds, according to him, that certain morphophonological phenomena that affect most of the verbal forms of Kikongo are not operative in Kituba: e.g., nasal, vocalic, and tonal harmony; haplology (deletion of one of two very similar syllables) and imbrication (coalescence of multiple morphemes); and, of course, grammatical tonal contrast. Lacking examples from Kimanyanga, we illustrate grammatical tone changes in Laadi (Table 8). Ayibite convinces one that more pidginization took place in Kikongo than some persons have been willing to admit, which we now discuss.

Table 7: A comparison of Kikongo and Kituba noun-class prefixation, based on Ayibite 1983.

	Kikongo		Kituba		Translation
1/2	mu+ntu / ba+ntu	1/2	mu+ntu / ba+ntu		person/s
1a/2	táata / ba+táata	1a/2	tata / ba+tata		father/s
13/4	mu+langi / mi+langi	13/4/2	mu+langi / ba+milangi		bottle/s
15/6	di+tádi / ma+tádi	15/6/2	di+tadi / (ba)+ma+tadi		stone/s
17/8	ki+ma / bi+ma	17/8/2	ki+ma / ba+bima		thing/s
19/10	nsóónso / nsóónso	19/10/2	nsonso / ba+nsonso		nail/s

Table 8: An illustration of grammatical tone changes in Laadi nouns according to their use in syntax, based on Blanchon and Creissels 1998.

Citation form	Subject form	Other contexts	Translations
lùbú		lùbù	<i>mosquito</i>
màzúlù		màzúlú	<i>sky</i>
màbá	mábà	màbá	<i>palm trees</i>

To continue this argument, let us get an idea of the linguistic challenge that foreigners encountered in the invasion of the Lower Congo. Lacking suitable data for the language spoken at Manyanga we can be instructed by the challenge that foreigners faced with Bantu languages by looking at two kinds of problems. In the province of Bandundu there are languages whose tones are not stable; they fluctuate according to certain rules: that is, where a syllable has low tone in one context but high in another.²⁸ Twenty-four rules are adopted for Gimbala, and the number of them needed sequentially to get from the base form to the spoken form according to generative rules of the 1970s, varies from five to nine (Ndolo 1972). The following one, starting with a practical transcription, is realized – with four levels of pitch – with six rules (p. 59, ô replacing o with a vertical diacritic, no translation provided):

Gágonusa mugagálôombidi giluùngu
Gá gálôombidi
gonusa muga gilu
ùngu

Another kind of challenge is the richness of the verbal system. Whereas Gimbala has only two kinds of future, the equatorial languages as a group have eleven. Taking the category with the largest number of languages so as to have the greatest amount of contrast, we look at futurity, focusing on distant and recent future in languages around the confluence of the Ubangi and Congo rivers (Motinge 1984). In eleven idioms (called *parlers* by the author) there are eleven different kinds of future. Not all of them, however, are attested for any one of these languages.

<u>Kinds of Future distinguished</u>	<u>Languages in which the type is attested</u>
Ordinaire	Lifonga, Lobala, Loi, Balobo, Ndobobo
Immédiat	Ebuku, Zamba
Proche	Likata, Libobi, Mbonji, Litoka
Eloigné	Ebuku, Likata, Libobi, Zamba, Mbonji, Litoka
Indicatif absolutif négatif	Ebuku, Mbonji, Balobo
Terminatif	Lifonga
Subordonnée	Litoka, Ndobobo

²⁸ Trying to learn Isungu, also called Mbatu, at Mbaiki, the CAR, in 1953, knowing about tone as a neophyte linguist but not about tone fluctuation, I failed to discover its rules. Today we know that “The phenomena of downstep and contour formation are common in Bantu” [Hyman and Tadadjeu 1976].

Distant (perhaps *remote*) *future*. According to Motingea's analyses there are five ways (numbered in bold) of marking distant future: the vowel quality and tone of the final vowel; only one (Zamba) has an overt prefix; two (Libobi and Mbonji) have an additional marker that is separated as a word. This might be an instance of analyticity in the language, but we must also consider this the emergence of a feature since the events that produced Bangala and Lingala. One notices in Libobi the marker **sa** also in Kimanyanga (Table 9, see page 150). Given the linguistic practice among speakers of different languages of the early period, it is not impossible that the equatorial jargon (Congolais, for which see below) that developed into Bangala adopted it from a Kikongo language – either directly or indirectly. It would appear that Motingea used a protocol for eliciting sentences; the French translations are his. Morphological divisions in the examples, introduced by myself, are marked in the verb with the plus sign and verbs are Roman. The author's (-) represents an affix and (—) a verb stem; the symbols for open front and back vowels that are found in a few words have been eliminated; the acute diacritic marks high tone. There is also a mid tone in Libobi, which is not shown in the examples. 'H', as given by the author, stands for high tone on the preceding segment, and a grammatical marker. Glosses are not provided by Motingea; the English translations are mine, based on the French; pagination within parentheses. Some help in parsing the examples comes from Lingala (Guthrie 1951, the English glosses are mine): **bwále** : *travail pénible, peine* (difficulty); **elóko** : *chose* (thing); **fúta** : *payer* (to pay); **masua** : *bateau* (boat); **moto** : *personne* (person); **na** : *avec* (with); **ngonga** : *gong, cloche* (clock); **nsima** : *ensuite* (later); **tumbola** : *punir, corriger* (punish); **yâ** : *venir* (come); **yína** : *sombrer* (to founder, overwhelm). **Nyamolo** and *Nzambe* obviously refer to Dieu (God).

(1a) Ebuku, - —í

Nzambe a+túmból+í bato básí ná bwale.

'Dieu punira les hommes méchants.'

'God will punish bad people.'

(Motingea 1984: 27)

(1b) Likata, -[with H tone] —á (,)

Nyamolo kélè a+íny+á bato bábe bítumbu.

'Dieu donnera des punitions aux gens méchants.'

'God will give punishment to bad people.'

(Motingea 1984: 61)

(1c) Libobi, **sá** - —á

Nyamôló sá a+túmból+á bato babe.

'Dieu punira de mauvaises [sic] gens'

'God will punish bad people.'

(Motingea 1984: 81)

- (1d) Zamba, -[H]**bí** —**á**
na+’bí+keez+a [sic] li’fútá nsímá
‘Je te donnerai un cadeau plus tard.’
‘I will give you a gift later on.’ (Motingea 1984: 118)

- (1e) Mbonji, **ndé** - —**í** [the final vowel is marked with query]
masúwa ndé mayé eleko ndé
‘Quand viendra le bateau?’
‘When will the boat arrive?’ (Motingea 1984: 154)

Near future. For near future we can make comparisons with the verb **-ya-** ‘to go.’ Here we find that in Likata only the final vowel is significant; Libobi again uses a separated marker in addition to a marked final vowel; Lifonga uses an optional separated marker without high tone on the final vowel for simple “future”; Mbonji has high tone on the subjectival prefix, a verbal prefix (**mo-**), and a marked final vowel. The prefix may be the same as in Lobala, the tense of which is simply “future.” In Libobi, as Motingea observes, there is even a periphrastic construction in addition to the morphological one with the verb **-yei** ‘to come’: **neyá né-songa** ‘je te suivrai’ (Motingea 1984: 81).

- (2) a. Lifonga, (**ne**) - —**a** (“futur”)
masuwá ne mâya
‘Le bateau viendra.’
‘The boat will come.’ (Motingea 1984: 43)
- b. Likata, - —**á**
nayá néké liba
‘Je te suivrai ensuite.’
‘I’ll follow you later.’ (Motingea 1984: 61)
- c. Libobi, **lé** - —**á**
lé neinyá omba yoko rima
‘Je te donnerai quelque chose plus tard.’
‘I’ll give you something later.’ (Motingea 1984: 81)
- d. Mbonji, -[H]**mo** —**á**
námoyá
‘Je viendrai.’
‘I’ll come.’ (Motingea 1984: 153)

- e. Lobala, -**amo** —**a** (“futur”)
masuwá mamóya ngónɡa ye?
 ‘Quand viendra le bateau?’
 ‘When will the boat come?’ (Motingea 1984: 101)
- f. Litoka, -**a** —**á** (métatonique?)
masúwa maeyá ngonga ba?
 ‘Quand viendra le bateau?’
 ‘When will the boat come?’ (Motingea 1984: 233)
- g. Zamba, - [with H] —**á** (“immédiat”)
masúwá mēyá mbèlè elo
 ‘Quand viendra le bateau?’
 ‘When will the boat come?’ (Motingea 1984: 118)

Nothing of these ways of expressing futurity was preserved in the Congolais jargon that came into being in the Middle Congo. This was probably a variety of the “trade language” that missionary John Weeks used near Bangala station in the 1890s, as did other whites and foreign Africans in that region, and perhaps already by indigenous people who were working for them. Perhaps the earliest, and most certainly the largest, work on Congolais was produced for white traders in French territory west of the Congo River. This is the way it was described by one of the contributors: “*La langue commerciale parlée dans les rivières Sangha et N’Goko diffère peu de celle en usage dans tout le bassin du Congo. En employant celle-ci dans mes précédents voyages, je me suis toujours fait comprendre depuis Matadi jusqu’au Stanley Falls (Etat Indépendant du Congo), ainsi que dans toutes les rivières*” [‘The commercial language spoken on the Sangha and N’Goko rivers differs only slightly from that which is used in the whole Congo River basin. Using this language on my previous voyages I am able to make myself understood from Matadi to Stanley Falls (Congo Free State) as well as on all the rivers.’] (Compagnie n.d.). And this is what he writes of its grammar in the same work:

Les conjugaisons des verbes peuvent être employées mais la grammaire en diffère d’une tribu à l’autre; elles sont d’ailleurs compliquées et donnent lieu à de nombreuses exceptions. Comme les indigènes comprennent parfaitement le blanc qui parle à l’infinitif et lui répondent également à l’infinitif, il semble inutile de charger la mémoire du nouvel arrivant d’une syntaxe très compliquée et qui n’est pas nécessaire pour la langue commerciale courante. [...] il ne faut pas perdre de vue que la langue commerciale n’est pas une langue propre, mais un assemblage de mots qui ont le plus frappé les indigènes commerçants voyageurs. [‘The conjugations of verbs can be used but their grammars differ from tribe to tribe; besides they are compli-

cated and have many exceptions. Since the natives understand perfectly well the white who uses the infinitive and respond with the infinitive, it seems that it would be useless to load the memory of the newly arrived white with a very complicated syntax which is not necessary for the current commercial language. [...] one must not forget that the commercial language is not a proper language, but a collection of words that have struck traveling native merchants.']

In the Sangha River variety the prefix **te** marks future tense (**nagai** [**ngai**] **tesala** 'I will work') – not used in the first sentence – and the combination **a-** and **-li** the past tense (**nagai asali** 'I worked'). In the Ngoko River variety the latter are absent. These are illustrated in the following sentences from the work. The glosses are mine, based on the work's dictionary.

- (3) **Bisu akumi soko moni akufi yuzo te.**
 we arrive when sun die all no
 'Nous arriverons à peu près au soleil couchant.'
 'We'll arrive about sunset.'
 (We'll arrive when the sun has not completely disappeared.)
- (4) **Tukutuku ake lero na tongo mene-mene.**
 soldier go today at time early
 'Les soldats sont partis ce matin de bonne heure.'
 'The soldiers left early this morning.'

Future in Kituba is marked very simply with **ke** followed by the verb stem. The word is said to be an abbreviated form of **kele** 'to be (in a state)' that is used only in the present tense as an auxiliary (Fehderau 1962; the following two examples [5–6] are from SIL, the analysis mine). Other etymologies for **ke**, however, might be adduced. For example, although the Portuguese-based creole of Principe uses **ka** for the progressive, the future is expressed with **ke** (Holm 1988: 91).

- (5) **Mama me lala ti yandi ke ya kubeela.**
 Mom PAST sleep because 3s COP of illness
 'Mom lay down because she's ill.'
 'Maman s'est couchée parce qu'elle est malade.'
- (6) **Mu ke kwiza ve.**
 1s COP come NEG
 'I won't come.'
 'Je ne viendrai pas.'

With respect to this point a number of questions call for answers, like those of one of the readers of an earlier version of this paper:

[A]re there no periphrastic progressive aspect structures in Kikongo and the languages of the region? If yes, do these structures involve copular forms? The reader would like to know more about possible continuities of Kikongo (and those of other Bantu languages) periphrastic progressive structures in Kituba. Is periphrastic progressive marking found in the Bantu languages of the area? Could the development of future marking in Kituba have involved the transfer of these patterns and the subsequent internal development of future marking via a cross-linguistically common grammaticalisation path rather than the creation of a wholly new system?

This and other readers might indeed be better informed, but we do not find information in what others have written about Kituba. As for the origin of Kituba's use of *ke*, it is the same in Sango. There is good evidence that it was introduced by speakers of some variety of Kikongo when colonial personnel spent time in the Ubangi River basin in the last two decades of the 19th century (Samarin 1986a). Contemporary examples (7–9) from recent tape-recorded speech of Sango are the following:

- (7) *da ti ala na[ni] a- ke na ya ti gbako.*
 house of 3pl DEF PM- COP at inside of forest
'Leur maison est dans la forêt.'
'Their house was in the forest.'
- (8) *lo oko la a- ke lango na ya ti da.*
 3sg one TOP PM- COP sleep at inside of house
'Elle dormait seule dans la maison.'
'She was the only one in the habit of sleeping in the house.'
- (9) *laso mbi na lo i ke gwe biani.*
 today 1sg and 3sg 1pl COP go truly
'C'est sur: aujourd'hui, je partirai avec lui.'
'Today he and I will go for sure.'

If one experiences vertigo in trying to grasp and retain the grammatical information about indigenous Bantu languages just provided, one will understand how quickly a foreigner would resort to anything of a linguistic nature, regardless of where it came from, to get things done. Pidginization, cleverly used, is a useful tool.

4.2 Kituba's features are of Bantu origin

Even though Kituba's striking grammatical differences from local Bantu languages might be the consequence of restructuration, it has been suggested that some at least are indigenous. Kimanyanga, after all, has a noun-concord system that is "irregular," and some features might have been adopted from Kiteke and Kiyansi (Mufwene 1986: 134, 136–137; 1988: 35; 1989: 78–80; 1997a: 46; 1997b: 192). Particularly puzzling is the role of Kiyansi in the making of Kituba since it was spoken originally, as noted above, far beyond the Lower Congo. If that language provided Kituba with an anomalous grammar of the noun phrase, which should be compared with presentations in Whitehead (1899) and Swartenbroecks (1948), some variety of it might very well have been already pidginized, the idiom that came to be called Bangala. And if evidence is found in only some contemporary varieties of the language, Kituba itself may have influenced this speech. Such a possibility is suggested by the fact that Sango is influencing Ngbandi, its lexifier in the Central African Republic. I can testify, for example, to having heard Sango's clause-final negative marker **pepe** (in origin an interjection 'No, no' in a Bantu language) being used in extemporaneous speech instead of the discontinuous form (comparable to *ne . . . pas* in French) at Mobaye in the Ngbandi heartland in 1973.

In the following tables we present all the data that have been offered as evidence for the view that Kituba's verbal system is based on a Bantu one. Table 9 is a comparison of some features of aspect in (a) Kikongo (Mufwene 1991: 129–130; see also 1988, but with no information on the dialect and on how the data were acquired), (b) Kimanyanga (as in Fehderau 1966), and (c) Kituba. *The symbol (+) indicates morpheme divisions and the verbal ending with the final vowel; **tá** in Kikongo is durative; **sa** in Kimanyanga is not glossed; **me** (or **mé**) in Kituba is glossed 'finish.' No information is provided about the origins of **me** and **ata** (the latter also in Mazemba 2007: 93). Table 10 is a comparison of the "delimitations" for three tense-aspect categories according to Fehderau (1966) in six varieties of Kikongo with those in Kituba for the verb 'to do;' (+) separates what Fehderau underlined. These paradigms, the best comparisons that we have at the moment, do not seem to support the claim that the best explanation for Kituba's periphrastic verbal constructions are derived from Bantu languages. We should also recognize that even when people *can* say something, we cannot claim that they *do* say this or that most of the time in most contexts, a fact that Dell Hymes used to reiterate.*

And the sample of contemporary Kituba in datum (10) is an entry for the word **lufwa** 'death' from SIL; the glosses are mine: **Mazono, kibusi ya munu kuzwaka dikubu ya nzila. Yandi kumaka pene-pene na lufwa ntangu ba nataka yandi**

Table 9: A comparison of three “delimitations” of tense-aspect in Kikongo (variety unknown), Kimanyanga, and Kituba with the verb ‘to eat,’ based on Mufwene (1991) (high tone marked).

Kikongo	Kimanyanga	Kituba
Tu+tá+di+á	W+eti dia.	Beto ké dia.
‘We are eating’	‘He is eating.’	‘We are eating.’
<i>Concomitant durative</i>	<i>Durative</i>	<i>Concomitant durative</i>
Tu+di+idí.	U+mana dia.	Beto mé dia.
‘We have eaten.’	‘He has eaten.’	‘We have eaten.’
<i>Near perfect</i>	<i>Perfect</i>	<i>Near perfect</i>
Tu+di+á.	U+sa dia.	Béto ata dia.
‘We will eat.’	‘He will eat.’	‘We will eat.’
<i>Subsequent / Future</i>	<i>Future</i>	<i>Subsequent / Future</i>

Table 10: A comparison of three tense-aspect categories in six varieties of Kikongo with those in Kituba.

Languages	Present Progressive	Present Habitutive	Remote Past Indefinite
Kituba	<i>yandi ke sala</i>	<i>yandi ke salaka</i>	<i>yandi salaka</i>
Kimanyanga	weti sala	usalanga	wasala
Kiyombe/No	ulembo sala	wati sala	usala
Kiyombe So	una sala	usalanga	wasala
Ladi	sala kata sala	sala kasalaka	wasala
Kisikongo	unasala	osalanga	wasala
Kintandu	ta sala	usalanga	usala

na lupitalu samu-ti menga basikaka yandi mingi. ‘Hier, ma sœur a eu un accident de la route. Elle était au plus mal quand on l’a transportée à l’hôpital car elle avait perdu beaucoup de sang.’ The simple past in Kituba is marked by the suffix **-ka**, but when it co-occurs with **me**, it indicates the past perfective (Fehderau 1966: 54). I introduce a hyphen in **samu-ti** only for convenience. The verbs are highlighted in Roman.

(10) **Mazono kibusi ya munu kuzwa + ka dikubu ya nzila.**

yesterday sister of 1s get ASP accident of road

‘Yesterday my sister had an accident on the road.’

‘Hier, ma sœur a eu un accident de la route.’

Yandi kuma + ka pene-pene na lufwa

3s become ASP near to death

‘She was near death’

‘Elle était au plus mal’

ntangu ba nata + ka yandi na lupitalu

when PL take ASP 3s to hospital

‘when they took her to the hospital’

‘quand on l’a transportée à l’hôpital’

samu-ti menga ba sika + ka yandi mingi

because.of blood PL leave ASP 3s much

‘because she had lost a lot of blood.’

‘car elle avait perdu beaucoup de sang.’

With data like those which have just been provided, one is left in “reasonable doubt” that the verbal system of Kituba is of Bantu origin rather than to any other mechanism of change, whether external or internal. Or one might say at least, “The jury is out.”

5 Comments and evaluations

5.1 Explaining isolating morphosyntax in Kituba

How do we explain what appears to be an anomaly in this Bantu language? Mufwene’s view, introduced above (3.6; 3.9.2), is that the developing Kituba language or its speakers “selected” (perhaps borrowed, adopted, or inherited according to earlier linguistic terminology) the “features” that we are referring to as

“isolating.”²⁹ What we might call the cognitive mechanism in language contact, we understand him to be saying, has to do with markedness. Pidgins and creoles – including Kituba, according to him – are the consequence of preferences for unmarked features: that is, whatever might be found in a contact situation when human beings have a choice. Since the dominant “morphosyntactic strategy” of Bantu languages is marked, he continues, we must explain the selection of unmarked ones in Kituba. The explanation is found, he suggests, in the “salience” of free morphemes. And in the case of noun phrases, one reason for the loss of the concordial system is that “it is form-based and serves no semantic function” (Mufwene 1993: 140). One hypothesizes, he proposes, that even when only one or more linguistic systems [WJS] in a contact situation have such features, their “particular” salience leads to their selection. This takes place, of course, by “trial and error” in attempts of individuals to communicate with each other (Mufwene 1987: 12; 1991: 133–138; 1997c: 320). All we need to validate the hypothesis in the case of Kituba, the argument continues, is the existence of the linguistic “models” somewhere at some time and the conditions for the selection to have taken place. It turns out that in this argument there is neither (a) a linguistic model nor (b) the conditions (the “ecology”) required for Kituba’s alleged development.

Evidence that Kituba’s isolating verbal features arose as innovations during a period of pidginization may very well lie in phenomena resembling auxiliaries in three languages: Kikongo (the *ethnic* variety), Bangala, and Sango. (1) “Auxiliary verbs” are said to occur in the variety of Kikongo used by Redemptorist Catholic missionaries – and presumably at least some of the regional Africans – in the *vicariat* of Matadi, a vast area from Matadi in the southwest to Kasangulu in the northeast, bordered by the Congo River and the border of Angola. The dialect is similar to the one described by Edvard Karl Laman (see below). According to Dereau (1955: 123, 126; 1957), there is a set of verbs that, when used as auxiliaries in conjugated form, before an infinitival verb, give “*une nuance de manière, de temps, de certitude, de rapidité, de répétition, etc.*” These are not odd or rare in the language: indeed, they are “*d’un emploi très fréquent.*” The verb **singa** ‘certifier,’ one example, adds the meaning ‘*sans faute (futur).*’ (2) In Bangala – the idiom that established itself very early in the northwest of the DRC – **linga** is both the verb ‘to hope, want’ and a “future marker.” (The source of the verb may be Bobangi’s **linga** ‘to want,’ in Lingala as **lingá** with the same meaning.) Bangala ex-

²⁹ The attribution of agency to both abstract cognitive processes – in my understanding – and human beings is, of course, insidious in linguistic discourse, therefore, not limited to this particular scholar. For examples of language as an agent of selection, nonetheless, we might cite the following of his works: Mufwene (1991: 136; 1997d: 66).

amples are the following: **yo alingi asala oyo** [2s want do this] ‘you should do this;’ **mbura alingi apika** [rain wants.to hit] ‘it is going to rain.’ The latter equivalent sentence in Sango means ‘it is about to rain,’ but its verb **yi** ‘want’ is not a formal auxiliary in this language. (3) In Sango **alingbi** does (or did at one time) resemble a grammatical auxiliary with the meaning ‘obligation.’ It is best attested from at least the 1950s among Protestants. It would appear that American missionaries serving with Baptist Mid-Missions in the eastern part of the colony, where Bangala was spoken by some, adopted the form, believing it to be the same as Sango’s **lingbi** ‘be enough, be able.’ Although not frequent in the latest version of the New Testament translated by a team of Central Africans (Alliance Biblique 2001), it does occur in the Gospel *Jean* 3: 7, as in (11), perhaps as a concession to the original published translation. A separated predicate marker has been adopted by the Bible Society as the means to create passive voice: ‘it.is.necessary [that] someone returns someone gives.birth you again.’ (I would not have translated the sentence this way, but the sense in the original is quite a challenge indeed.)

- (11) **Alingbi a kiri a du ala mbeni**
 PM-be.able PM return PM give.birth 2pl again
 ‘You must be born again.’

5.2 Trade and the alleged centrality of Manyanga

One is not obliged to accept the view that the Manyanga variety of Kikongo and its allegedly closest relatives are the basis of Kituba, already mentioned in Sections 2.1; 3.4; and 3.6. The linguistic evidence Fehderau uses to claim that “the central core of Kikongo dialects to which Kituba is most basically related” (1996: 98) is insufficient and inadequately argued. He arrives at this conclusion by comparing only 60 “meanings,” like *back* (presumably referring to a human body) for similarity in form and meaning in 10 varieties of Kikongo with words in the contemporary Kwilu variety of Kituba. These words or phenomena were chosen from the 200-word list that had been proposed by Morris Swadesh as a measure for determining the closeness of language relationships in time because of their assumed resistance to change, that is, being less frequently replaced by words that are not cognates (for a list of which see Samarin 1967). According to this procedure the alleged Kimanyanga variety shows the highest score of similarity to Kwilu Kituba (513 points), and the others from this “core” area close to it (508, 489, and 473 respectively). We are not informed about the geolinguistic integrity of this apparent dialect cluster. We are also left in ignorance about decisions that had to be made

about what constituted similarity. Nonetheless, this similarity (and only in vocabulary) can be explained by other ways than by tracing Kituba's origin to the trade networks in existence before modern colonization that was discussed above, as we now argue.

First, the slight lexical similarities between Kwilu Kituba and an alleged Kimanyanga dialect might very well be due to population movement subsequent to the new language's origin, the result of (a) harsh treatment and suffering under the whites and their African forces, beginning with portage through this area in the 1880's and 1890s and the construction of the railway that replaced it (Axelson 1970: 214, 218, 263) and of (b) the opportunities for a better living these refugees might have had in the Kwango-Kwilu area, which are alluded to by Fehderau (1966: 106). Here, where linguistic diversity – among Bantu languages nonetheless – was greater than in the Kikongo area, the lingua franca probably took root quickly and has had, as Fehderau observes, an “elevated position,” whereas in the west it is denigrated. According to the official colonial map of 1959 there were 2–3 inhabitants per km² along the left bank of the Kasai River and 4–5 around the confluence of the Kwango and Kwilu rivers (République démocratique du Congo 1959).

Second, and much more convincing, is the fact that this distribution of supposedly closely related dialects in Fehderau's study is the very area where scores of Swedish missionaries of the Svenska Missionsförbundet (in English the Mission Covenant Church) worked since 1887.³⁰ This mission was the largest of all Protestant missions in the Lower Congo in the period with which we are concerned. Fehderau's dialects are not really “located around Manianga” (1966: 98), because his map “Degree of cognation of Kikongo dialects with Kwilu Kituba” reveals that together they are distributed over most of the Kikongo area in a somewhat triangular way, one corner in the northwest, one in the northeast, and the third in the south. Kimanyanga is conveniently placed in the middle, but not near Manyanga! Indeed, in 1910 there was no mission at Manyanga at all, neither Protestant nor Catholic, and only a small government post on the right bank of the Congo. In an ethnographic map of 1961 the “Bamanianga” are located around the town of Luozi, a little over 130 km northwest of Thysville (now Mbanza-Ngungu). If Manyanga had once been of great importance commercially, it had become unimportant before or very soon, and very quickly, after modern colonization began.

³⁰ A thorough study of all documents relating to the Swedish mission (in Swedish, of course), some of which, unfortunately, are still closed to the public, will probably disclose important aspects of the origin of Kituba. A good list is found in Axelson (1970).

The main station of the Swedish mission was at Mukimbungu, at the apex of the inverted triangle just described. Its four most important stations in 1910 were, in the north, Kingoyi, in the west Kinkenge, Diadia, Kibunzi, and Mukimbungu, and east of Manyanga, north of the Congo River, only at Musana, approximately congruent with Fehderau's sketch map. The caravan route for portage had once gone through Mukimbungu but was replaced by one further south. The mission placed great importance on the use of Kikongo, on literacy, on publications, and on education. (For its village schools see Axelson 1970.) One of its missionaries wrote the first grammar, in Swedish, which appeared in 1888. Another version by Laman was published in 1899 (in 2500 copies!), in English published in 1912. Laman must surely be considered one of the pioneers in the study of Bantu languages. He recognized the importance of tone and used wax-phonograph recordings of speech, songs, and stories to study the language, with a special interest in phonetics. The phonograph was given or lent to him by Carl Meinhof, already a noted Bantuist, when Laman visited him in Hamburg.

It is the Kikongo variety used by the Swedish mission, we must conclude, that leads to what Fehderau called the Manyanga variety. The first grammar by Nils Westlind is based on the speech of Mazinga, about 10 kilometers away, I estimate, from Mukimbungu. This is "*i mellersta delen av nedre Kongodalen*" ['as spoken in the middle part of Lower Congo']. It "came to influence all other dialects," and became the standard variety of the Lower Congo through the publication of a monthly magazine, beginning in 1892 (Petzell 2003: 47). Understandably, it was used by Laman as the central variety in his Kikongo dictionary. One should not, therefore, wonder that this intervention in linguistic history led to the adoption of sixty words at one or several places, including the Kwilu-Kwango area, by speakers of Kituba! At Bandundu (see map of RDC 1959), Catholics produced a grammar of Kituba and by 1999 had published 650 works in this language (Lufungula 1999: 282), a fact that must also have influenced its vocabulary. Faced, therefore, with the information we now have about the kind of ethnic language that was being used by missionaries in the 1880s and 1890s, we are obliged to avoid dogmatic statements about the lexical similarities that characterized Kikongo.

We study also with benefit the state of the Lower Congo at the end of the 19th century. It is recognized as having been a rather impoverished and not highly populated region. At the end of the 19th century the estimated population was just 300,000 to 400,000 (Randles 1968: 147).³¹ Many of the villages in certain areas consisted of six huts at the maximum (Kratz 1970: 369.) Therefore the

³¹ Whether or not a high or dense population (or both) is necessary for the emergence of a pidgin (in the case of Sango it was not), it is a factor, in any case, that must be considered.

commodities that whites obtained here for export were limited. Very little of this commerce suggests the kind of social and commercial networking that is required by Fehderau's account. In fact, the contrary should be recognized. The slave trade had introduced to the area, as elsewhere in Africa, conflict, instability, and rapaciousness. Owners of what historians call domestic slaves did not sell them off unless there were culturally significant reasons for doing so, like thievery. Slaves were mostly captives in raids and warfare or persons who had been kidnapped. Such an unstable and dangerous environment would not be expected to contribute to the creation of a new language, not even a pidginized one of a closely related language.³² For a critique of a view about slaves in the creation of Sango see Samarin (2008).

5.3 Stress and pitch in Kituba

As noted in Section 4.1, some writers do not consider Kituba a tone language.³³ Mazemba (2007) does. He cites minimal pairs like *mbala* 'time' with low-low and *mbála* 'yam, potato' with high-low. Some of his examples are not supported by SIL, like *nkáka* 'other' vs *nkaká* 'grandparent' and *nganda* 'rest area' and *ngánda* 'outside,' which are given as *nganda* and *ngaanda*, the latter with high tone on the long vowel. Mazemba also says nothing about the very high (and almost predictable) frequency of what he considers high tone (but stress by SIL) on the penultimate syllable; and he does not explain variations in tone, as in *mónó* vs *móno* 'I,' nor does he seem to have accurately distinguished between contrastive and phrasal pitch (about which see Samarin 1952), as in the following examples of his. In these the diacritics are Mazemba's, and I have made a few other inconsequential modifications. He seems to consider *ke*, incidentally, a prefix, whereas Fehderau and SIL a separate word.

³² One would want to evaluate this conclusion, however, on the basis of the number of slaves (10,122) imported to Surinam alone from West Central Africa between the years 1675 and 1714, an average of 159 per year, the highest average being 971 in the period 1685–1689 (based on Smith 2009: 53). Not all of these persons, however, were necessarily from the Lower Congo. Some came from way up the Congo River, whence the Bobangi sent human merchandise down the river, and others would have come from the region south of the Congo.

³³ Tone languages are in this paper understood to be those in which pitch (tone) is used in any way as a formal property of linguistic structure and lexicon. In the past few decades, knowledge about such languages has grown considerably, leading to a refinement in terminology.

- (12) *Nkí yài?*
 what? this
 'What's this?'
- (13) *Yái mukánda.*
 this book
 'This is a book.'
- (14) *Yína nki?*
 that what?
 'What is that?'
- (15) *Ngé ké sála nkí bi- lumbu yái?*
 2s COP do what PL- day this
 'What are you doing these days?'

Some members of SIL International have also come to the conclusion that Kituba has both stress and pitch. It was published as follows:

Use of computer analysis of pitch and loudness has led to the conclusion that tone does exist apart from stress in Munukutuba. In 94.7% of words with high pitch, high pitch and stress occur on the same syllable. However in 5.3% of words with high pitch, the high pitch and stress occur on different syllables. A rule has not yet been found for these exceptions. There are two pitches in the language—high and low. 92.89% of the words carry the main pattern of low pitch with a single high pitch on the penultimate syllable. 4.62% of the words carry the secondary pattern which consists of low pitch only. 2.49% of the words carry other patterns where high pitch exists but falls other than on the penultimate syllable. There does not appear to be a rule which can identify which pattern a given word will have. Although tone is contrastive, it carries a low functional load as evidenced by the lack of minimal pairs (only three have been found in the language and even with those native speakers are not consistent) and the fact that a foreign speaker is easily understood even if he is totally unaware of tone. Tone is not written in the Munukutuba orthography. [Tone] has no bearing on noun classes (Buchanan 1996/1997).

In other words, in 94.7 per cent of the words (in my calculations) high pitch and loudness occur together. Moreover, their placement in polysyllabic words is almost predictable: in 92.89 per cent of the words with pitch occur with the penultimate syllable. John Goldsmith (n.d.) would take this as “a situation in which the penult becomes statistically more dominant as the prosodically emphasized syllable.” What led the linguists to conclude that Kituba continues to be a tone language is that 5.3 per cent occur with stress and high tone. According to Mufwene it is only “the majority of words” that have only one high tone on the penult (1997b: 176). This resembles the phenomenon that linguists in the ‘descriptive’ era had to

contend with when trying to establish on purely formal grounds the phonemic system of a language, leading some to accept ‘co-existent systems.’ (The phoneme frequently occurred in a sub-set of the lexicon: personal names, borrowed words, etc.) Not convinced by this report, I corresponded in 2008 with someone who had made the study, but she could not help me, having left SIL in 2000, and could remember very little about the work she had undertaken.

Yet another contemporary understanding of the distribution of tone in Kituba words is that of Abibitumi Kasa Afrikan Language and Liberation Institutes (AKALLI) that is found on its web site (H for high tone and L for low).

1. The penultimate syllable has H.
2. The last syllable has H.
3. All syllables have L.
4. All syllables of the stem have L and the prefix that immediately precedes the stem H.
5. All the syllables of the stem have H and all the prefixes have L.

If any of the languages that contributed to Kituba’s emergence were characterized by tonal fluctuation, with or without downstep, these features (for which see Section 4.1) disappeared in Kituba, exactly what we would expect in pidginization.

Second, we must conclude that no one has yet produced the kind – and quality – of analysis of pitch, stress, and vowel length in Kituba that we can rely on to arrive at a reasonable conclusion, if not a definitive one, about what their roles are in Kituba. So let us consider the following. If pitch must be recognized as linguistically significant in the speech of some speakers of contemporary Kituba in some varieties, one might account for it speculatively, as follows.

(a) In one of its early stages a form of the language emerged – and among some speakers who constituted a model for others – without any or inconsistent use of pitch; more or less predictable stress on the penultimate syllable became the pattern for reasons not yet fully understood.

(b) The loss of tone can be explained by the failure of foreigners to learn to use it at all. These could have been Europeans and speakers of non-tonal African languages like Swahili and Wolof. With respect to this suggestion the following remarks are pertinent. I have doubted allegations about the role of Europeans in West Central Africa because they have not been supported with evidence. My view has been that they were too few in number to have initiated the jargons that would become *lingua francas* (Samarin 1982b). Perhaps we should admit that tone is a special case, as in the variety of ethnic Kikongo used by Catholic missionaries in the *vicariat* of Matadi. It is possibly significant that Léon Dereau’s grammar of it (1955, with map of *vicariat*) was “inspired” by lessons for missionaries that had been in use since at least the beginning of the 20th century. The

author has no doubt about tone and stress: Kikongo dialects in the vicariat are not “tone languages,” unlike Kiyombe studied by E. K. Laman. Stress, on the other hand, is predictable: it occurs on the first syllable of the radical, but if a word has prefixes or infixes; and if a word has more than three syllables, accent is placed also on the penult: **sála**, **n’súmuki**, **kulusámina**, **sálasána** (glosses not provided, bold replaced by acute accent). Vowel length, however, is important. Lexical tone is also not important in Whitehead’s analysis of Bobangi, first published in 1899. Tone (“raised” or “lowered”), he writes, is “similar to the use in English of long and short vowels,” as quality and quantity are in Latin. Here also “accent” (stress) is “almost invariable.” In nouns “it is usually placed on the first syllable of the word when stripped of its alliterative prefix” (1964: 3, 5). European languages might also have had an effect. The hypothesis seems to be credible when one reflects on what happened to Sango. There are several words regularly used by some Central Africans in which penultimate stress dominates words with more than one syllable. Since this pattern has characterized the Sango of Anglophone missionaries, these speakers might have been responsible for it at least in these words. Although some readers might doubt the contribution of “non-native minority speakers” in language change, it is certainly implicit in assuming that native speakers of a language acquire the “reduced” variety that is spoken by foreigners.

Evidence for the early appearance of stress in Kituba might be found in Sango words of Bantu origin, regardless of their ultimate origin, like Portuguese and Arabic. (The presence of Ubangians and other persons familiar with the Kikongo jargon, at whatever stage it was in, is documented in my publications already cited.) The Sango words that interest us are those whose penultimate syllables carry high or, according to others, mid tones. I suggest that some or all such words came to the Sango-speaking area with *stressed* syllables and that stress was replaced by *pitch*. In an attempt to determine which Bantu language (or languages) was being propagated with stress, cognates for a random sample of Sango words was prepared (Table 11). It shows similarities (shaded cells) and differences in the tones of penultimate syllables where relevant: for Sango (Bouquiaux et al. 1978, Samarin field work), Lingala ([some vowels not distinguished] Guthrie 1951; MRM 1991), Kikongo (long vowels doubled, tones unmarked] Dereau 1957, Laman and Westling 1950)), Kituba (SIL 2004–2006 [high tone with stress, long vowels doubled]), and Bobangi (Whitehead 1899 [vowel qualities ignored]). The glosses are approximate and have been chosen to show similarities; extended meanings are ignored. (Bobangi is included only because of its contribution to the emergence of Lingala and Laari because of its being a variety of Kikongo.) We must remember that Anglophone missionaries, who began arriving in the 1920s, would also have used stress, not realizing that every vowel had a specific tone. There was variation

Table 11: A sample of Sango words of Bantu origin (vowels with high tone marked) compared with those in West Central Bantu languages.

English	Sango	Kituba	Kikongo	Bobangi	Lingala
box	sandúku	sandúku	sanduku	—	sanduku < Swahili
celebration	matánga	matáánga	mataanga <i>funeral feast</i>	—	matanga <i>mourning</i>
chili (red hot pepper)	piripíri, píripírí	pili-píli	—	—	pilipili < Swahili?
conversation	lisoro	—	—	lisolo	lisolo
disorder	kírikiri	kilíkili	—	—	kili-kili <i>in disorder</i>
fat, oil	mafúta, mafuta, maafa	mafúta	mafuta	—	mafúta
grasp, v.	kamáta	—	—	—	-kamata <i>take</i>
misery, pain	mpási	mpási	mpasi	mpasi (Yansi)	mpasi
open, v.	lungúla	kufungúla	—	longola <i>take away</i>	-longala <i>remove</i>
pray	sambúla, sambéla	kusaambíla	saambila	sambela <i>reach towards to get</i>	-sambela <i>implore</i>
rope	kámba	—	n'singa	—	nkámbá
spear	likongó	dikóónga	—	likongo	likongó ³⁴
suffering	mawa	máwa	—	mawa <i>grief</i>	mawa
traditional	basánzi	—	—	—	basénji
wash	sukúla	kusukúla	sukula	—	-sukula

³⁴ For Lingala the distinction between mid and low front and back vowels are not distinguished. MRM 1991 does not show high tones even though other words are shown with high tone. There are minimal pairs, such as **-kambá** ‘to make a mistake’ and **-kamba** ‘to manage, direct.’

Table 12: Tone patterns of French words in the Sango of young people in Bangui, 1988.

Patterns		Numbers	Percentages
Nouns <i>policier, mesure, chapeau, hôpital</i>			
Levelled		16	26%
Raised	Steady	25	40%
	Falling	48	85%
Verbs <i>menacer, mélanger, manquer, partager</i>			
Levelled		45	19%
Raised	Steady	64	27%
	Falling	200	85%

among missionaries, of course. I recall that in the 1950s that stress (with high pitch) occurred on the first syllable of a word: e.g., **sám-bíla** instead of **sambíla** ‘to pray,’ where vowel length might have been perceived as a stressed and long vowel. Sango tone marking in this table follows the standardization offered by the dictionary prepared by Bouquiaux and his colleagues (1978), two of whom were Central Africans; its entries occur in the table as first of more than one variant. The occurrence of mid tone in my opinion is problematic, not that mid tone does not exist in Sango but that no one has demonstrated that it is the most frequently used tone in these word to justify this representation. If we adopt the view that Kituba is a language with predictable (or almost predictable) stress and phonemically significant vowel length, it appears that Sango owes more to it than any of the other Bantu languages. Lingala cognates reveal that they usually have a different sequence of tones in the last two syllables. This experiment, however, needs more words in the Sango list and better data from Bantu languages.

Other evidence for foreign influence in Sango is provided in Samarin (1986a and 1989b) with respect to the word for money and, more significantly, the copula. And we cannot ignore a few words from French that are characterized by this pattern, as in Figure 7, noting that the processes of change are not all alike: **fúti** is the best example of phonetic stress moving to the penult; **faránga** and **séti**, the latter fully integrated for some speakers instead of the Ngbandi word result from the addition of a syllable; **púsu** results from the conjugated form written as *Pousse!* in a command. This could have happened, of course, in another language, like Kituba, and then the word was brought to the Ubangians.

fúti	‘be ruined’	<i>foutu</i>
faránga	‘franc’	<i>franc</i>
séti	‘seven’	<i>sept</i>
púsu	‘push’	<i>pousse</i>

Fig. 7: Some Sango words of French origin with high tone on the penultimate syllable.

Other patterns – such as high-falling, high, or mid on the final syllable – would of course be typical of French-influenced speech of the Catholic population and others educated in this language. Readers might justifiably doubt that “French intonation” would lead to those tonal patterns in a consistent way. They should recognize, therefore, as a reasonable explanation that the source was not the intonation of extemporaneous speech but citation forms learned in the classroom. The probability of different sources is illustrated by the word *monsieur*. Said in isolation it occurs as *mesê* (ignoring variations in vowel quality) but when followed by a personal name, as *mese*.

(c) In Kituba, at the same time perhaps, some lexemes retained traditional pitch. And some words could even have been introduced some time after Kituba had become a stable language. Ayibite (1983), for one, believes that tone is becoming pertinent in Kituba due to the influence of Lingala: “*De plus en plus la tonalité tend à être pertinente en kituba grace à l’influence du lingala et des langues vernaculaires parlées dans l’aire du kituba*” (p. 32) [‘More and more “tonality” is becoming significant because of the influence of Lingala and of vernacular (ethnic) languages spoken in the Kituba region’]. This seems to have occurred in Cameroon Pidgin English, if we understand Jean-Paul Kouega (2008); see also Samarin (2009). One finds high and low tones occurring on words derived from Cameroonian indigenous languages, for words such as codfish and dried herring. If this speculation seems incredible, one should note what happened to words that were adopted from Swahili – whether directly from East Africans or indirectly from other Africans who were their companions: the stress accent was understandably replaced by high pitch in some words but not in others.³⁵ Whatever is going on in Kituba now, we should recognize that mixed systems are found in Afro-European creoles of the Atlantic basin, an early and general treatment being that of Devonish (1989).

(d) Another piece of evidence of on-going tone changes can be cited for Sango. It is incontrovertible in my opinion that since the 1950s the final vowels of

³⁵ It is understandable that some readers might be incredulous about the role that Swahili may have played in Sango’s history. For evidence that Swahili-speaking Zanzibaris were employed in the Belgian project see Samarin 1989a and the paper on Swahili (in press).

the negative marker **pepè** (**apè** in the vernacular), with mid-low tones, and the verb **tènè** 'to say' have been replaced by vowels with high-falling pitch and stress: **pepê** and **apê**. This seems to have happened in the last twenty or thirty years, first among Central Africans who had been educated in French, where it is still most characteristic. Motivation for the change has not, however, been found, and its appearance is counter-intuitive, for originally, to my knowledge, this tonal pattern was significant for emphasis, as in '(I said), Don't go there!'

The retention of the prosodic feature of French words in Sango is seen in an analysis of 130 tape recordings (selected from almost 500) in Bangui in 1988 of spontaneous discourse by children and adolescents aged two to sixteen, with an even sample of subjects of both genders, and with different histories of education: from non-schooled to first-year Lycée.³⁶ The recordings were taken by two Central African university students, male and female, and myself. They include narratives, recipes, how-to's, traditional tales, and discussions. For the sake of brevity we examine only the tonal patterns in nouns and verbs, which occur in 285 and 74 types (different) of polysyllabic words respectively. The analysis is presented in Table 11, with an example of some words. The percentages are of all occurrences and are not based on the numbers given here, the reason being that some words occurred with more than one pattern. One sees that the most frequent patterns mimic French prosody (a dynamic high- or mid-falling) or retain only a raised but steady pitch (mid or high). The slightly higher incident of Raised with nouns has no explanation. If this analysis confirms what one would have expected in an environment where French remains the most prestigious language, the noticeable profile of Levelled pitch gives one thought.

Linguists will be interested in what is happening in Kituba because of the recent focus on systems where tone and stress co-occur. Describing these systems is a sufficient challenge in the study of traditional languages but equally so in explaining their origin in new languages. In the case of Kituba, we must note that Kintandu, one of the varieties of Kikoongo found between Manyanga and Brazzaville (a distance of about 152 km/95 mi during the portage period), is a language with both of these suprasegmental features (Daelman 1983, Goldsmith n.d.), an instance perhaps of what linguists have been referring to as pitch-accent (and stress-accent) when a feature does or does not occur, depending on certain rules, whereas until recently tone has been thought of as a phonological constituent like a consonant or vowel. It is too early to even speculate on the significance of this fact for Kituba.

³⁶ The present analysis and table are based on work done in 2002 by James Walker, a student assistant at the University of Toronto (now teaching at York University, Ontario), in a research project funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (of Canada).

5.4 Theory in the service of Kituba's historiography

In reviewing what may have been accomplished in this article, we do well to orient ourselves by coordinates proposed by Umberto Ansaldo (2009). *Contact languages* is not only the most recent comprehensive exposé on language change in “contact conditions,” going beyond case studies of “ecology and evolution in Asia” to understand ‘language contact’ comprehensively. Its focus is on “contact language formation” (CLF), defined as “the evolution of new languages in multilingual environments” (2009: 1). Although indebted to his predecessors, Ansaldo leads us in a new direction.

The present study of the origin of Kituba might very well have been a part of a work similarly subtitled *Ecology and Evolution of West Central Africa*, because three new languages (four if Bangala is included) emerged in the colonial ecology at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th. That is my thesis argued in various ways in specific essays over more than thirty years. The Congo River and Ubangi River basins served as a test tube for an experiment in language creation. The new phenomena, despite some similarities, are different from each other. How did this happen? This is the question that has interested me for about fifty years. As for Kituba, we do well to close by considering three significant features of Ansaldo's rich theory to question their applicability.

5.4.1 External ecology

The details provided above in this paper, laborious perhaps for the casual reader, demonstrate my conviction that we must be well informed about the context or environment (now being referred to as external ecology by ‘evolutionary’ linguists). Ansaldo not only affirms (p. 11) that social, political, cultural, and historical patterns may influence language use, but that “observations of a socio-historical nature” are “the main force” behind contact language formation, as advocated by Thomason and Kaufman 1988 (pp. 3–4); it is something, indeed, he admits to emphasizing (2009: 12). And whether one adopts – for what one might call theoretical reasons – the view that language changes at the level of a population, as does Ansaldo, or at the level of the individual, as does Mufwene (1997d: 330), we are in agreement that people are responsible for language change. That is the reason I provide so much information about ethnic populations and some of the languages they may have spoken. Ansaldo and I also agree on the importance of population movements within a specified ecology in the formation of new languages; he makes an even stronger claim than I have been willing to make: namely, that change takes place “in general” as a result of language con-

tact (p. 214, my paraphrase) although it certainly happened in the Congo, as noted in Section 3.9.1.

5.4.2 Gradual change

On the rate of change, on the other hand, it appears that Ansaldo and I are not in agreement. He considers “‘abrupt’ creolization” a “dubious notion” (or “doctrine”) (2007: 175, 176; 2009: 92), as do Mufwene (1992: 137, 141, 145; 2001) and others, in their own words, of course. Bickerton’s discussion (1991) on this topic must be ignored because of the exceptional nature of his starting point. As one might have expected, there have been different opinions on this topic, and whereas pidgins tend to arise in catastrophic contexts, creoles evolve in contexts where there are interruptions in the ordinary transmission of language and “equilibrium is punctuated in a speech community” (Mufwene 2000: 61). It takes time, Ansaldo seems to imply, for linguistic features to be propagated and replicated in a human population, and ‘speed’ (the quotation marks are his) is “a reflection of the type and size of community in which language change occurs, as well as of the specific conditions of language appropriation” (2009: 93–94, 119). This seems to restrict the significance of calendrical time. He believes, for example, that “exceptionalist scenarios” do not apply to Sri Lanka Malay, whose evolution has a time-span of “roughly” 300 years (2009: 92, 141). If Ansaldo has been understood, there can be no creation of what used to be called a stable pidgin in a few decades. Indeed, he holds this view: “Invoking a rapid development from a reduced linguistic code [. . .] is ahistorical and atheoretical” (2009: 142). As might be expected, the view is not shared by others: like Thomason (2002: 107, 108; 2003: 111) and myself. On the origins of pidgins, it has been argued that some pidgins have arisen in a couple of decades: for example, Sranan (Voorhoeve 1964, 1971, 1973); Chinook Jargon (Samarin 1986b, 1988b), and Sango; rapid grammatical change in Sango was discussed in Samarin (1994 and 2007).

5.4.3 Identity alignment

This phenomenon is important, if not critical, to Ansaldo’s theory of contact language formation: a whole chapter is devoted to it. Fearful of misrepresenting his argument, I present it briefly in his words.

In newly formed ecologies [. . .] a community that has achieved a critical demographic mass and stability in the new space will often start identifying itself as a discrete cultural unit (2009: 8, see also 4).

I propose that the processes of admixture, i.e. selection of features from different linguistic codes and recombination in a new grammar, is the natural outcome of an identity alignment that *typically* occurs in ethnically heterogeneous contexts. In these contexts, a newly emerged community with multiple linguistic resources is *prone to* realigning its identity through a cultural accommodation that involves linguistic negotiation of the codes available in its environment (2009: 150, italics added).

Italics are introduced here not with irony or sarcasm but to highlight the possibility that the emergence of a new identity, as presented so well by Robert Le Page and Andrée Tabouret-Keller (2006), may not apply to some cases of pidgin origins. It may not apply to the evolution of Kikongo into Kituba although, as seen in Section 3.7, Mufwene seems to think that it does. The notion is not new to me. I have insinuated anecdotally in my publications about West Central Africa the idea of culture change – rapid, for sure, and brutal, too often – as part of colonization for central Africans. I should have been more explicit about it in *The black man's burden* (1989a). But I made a special case of it in Samarin (1988a), where I showed that colonization should not be conceived of exclusively of unequal relationships between colonists and their auxiliaries, on the one hand, and the indigenous people, on the other hand. But I did not suggest that the congenial natives who had joined African auxiliaries around the fire at night, mostly young people probably, were experiencing a change in their identity. This was happening to some, of course. (And all psycho-cognitive change is variable.) They might have been the domestic servants (the *boys*) of whites and foreign Africans (until the independence of the Central African Republic, being a *boy* was a privileged employment; see Section 3.7); many would have been those in the *Force Publique*, in which they exercised power at the behest of white authorities. With respect to Kituba, however, it has yet to be demonstrated that it *emerged* (emphasis here being necessary) as a language in a population of speakers who were emerging with a new socio-cultural identity. By the time there were Bakongo underlings of whites using *Kikongo ya Leta*, it was already a language.

6 Conclusion

First, the easiest explanation for Kituba's origin is the most reasonable, but my earliest statement was simplistic: “[Kituba] clearly emerged as the result of labor recruitment – especially for portage – among these people after Europeans began going up to the Pool” (Samarin 1986: 139). In the present exposition we see that the origin is more complex, but it still is a *sufficient* explanation for the stripping off of some of Kikongo's affixes and the remedial implementation of isolating

syntax. It is also a *powerful* explanation, given the fact that it applies also to the origin of Lingala.³⁷ The argument is reinforced by demonstrating that non-traditional kinds of population agglomerations were probably not as important as one might think and that African personnel – foreigners of various kinds in the Lower Congo – played a significant role in colonial activities and arguably in the creation of Kituba. Thomason and Kaufman (1988) could very well have used Kituba in support of the idea that in the creation of a pidgin, adults “‘negotiate’ a new medium of communication by acquiring or maintaining structures that are most readily understood by their interlocutors” in a “genesis process” that is abrupt. But I do not share Thomason’s view that the goal of people in these circumstances “is the *creation* of a contact medium” (1982: 480, italics added). People were just trying to communicate with each other. My view is recapitulated summarily in the following formulations:

1. *There is no evidence of a Bantu koiné or lingua franca before the 1880s.*
2. *Too little is known about regional trade and its relations with international trade to assume that there was a so-called trade language.*
3. *The advantage of a vehicular jargon appeared because of the massive interaction of Bakongos from different parts of the Lower Congo with the large numbers of foreign Africans in central Africa.*
4. *Whites did not play an important role in the creation of Kituba.*
5. *Linguistic evidence for the widespread use of Bakongos is in the adoption of the simplified form of the copula in Sango and other words.*
6. *The adoption of a non-Bantu type of morphosyntax in Kituba is best explained by (a) the influence of foreign languages (not just West African ones) and (b) the inherent human strategy to simplify under duress.*
7. *The development (in my sense) of Kituba took place after the jargon was stabilized and began to be used by other people in the Belgian Congo.*
8. *The typological classification of Kituba as it exists today remains problematic, depending on the terms that are being used and on a linguist’s interpretation of its history.*

Second, thanks to Mufwene, it would appear that something happened to Kituba in the Bandundu region *after* its origin in the Lower Congo (see Section 3.8). Its history therefore may be as interesting as, and even more interesting

³⁷ The rather close linguistic relationship between Kituba and Lingala has not yet been explained. We should therefore note that Weeks (1913: 48) said, “what is called the ‘Bangala language’” was a mixture of Kibangi, Swahili, and Kikongo, “with a smattering of [presumably vernacular] Bangala words thrown in.”

than, the story of its origin. We look forward, then, to a serious and comprehensive multi-disciplinary history of this region. It will contribute not only to the history of Africa but to linguistics as well.

Third, the genesis of Kituba has evaded the comprehension of linguists, and this failure will continue as long as we do not view the origin of pidgins as a unique phenomenon. At a conference on the genesis of language, Kenneth C. Hill identified orderliness as the mission of linguistics, which was challenged by the alleged ‘disorderliness’ of pidgins,³⁸ so he was pleased to see that pidgins were being explained by “the workings of deep psycholinguistic and language-universal processes” that were being heralded at that time by a number of prophetic personalities (Hill 1979: viii). (One of them was described as “visionary.”) An example of this orderliness was presented at this conference by Derek Bickerton in an argument that he had introduced a few years earlier and was to repeat for several more. In “creole languages,” he claimed, “there are three aspectual markers, and when they co-occur in a sentence, they occur in the same order.” What makes this co-occurrence predictable, he theorized – what accounts for surprising similarities in unrelated and even geographically distant languages – is the innate language faculty that is realized in the confection of new languages. Creoles, but only “plantation creoles,” provide evidence for this human facility. Sankoff (1979: 24) seemed to concur:

It is difficult to conceive of another situation [than the plantation system] where people arrived with such a variety of native languages; where they were so cut off from their native language groups; where the size of no one language group was sufficient to insure its survival; where no second language was shared by enough people to serve as a useful vehicle of intercommunication; and where the legitimate language [. . .] was inaccessible to almost everyone.

At that time a considerable amount was already known about other pidgins, as can be seen in the bibliographical compilation of John Reinecke (1975). Sango was excluded in written private communication from Bickerton, but Juba Arabic was included by him, despite the fact that it is not a plantation creole

Juba Arabic is more accurately judged to be a pidgin of roughly the same age as Sango, and like Sango it is also the linguistic consequence of population movements and territorial conquest and occupation – and not (or not glibly) of colonization. For the latter we note the following: “we know of no cases where a ‘pidgin’ has developed in conditions other than those of modern colonial expansion” (as

³⁸ Early in my career I also was active in discovering ‘orderliness’: for example, in African ideophones, pidgins, and glossolalia (Samarin 1975a).

above, quotation marks in original). Juba's verbal system is not as neat as Bickerton claims it to be. Although there are several preverbal particles that mark aspect and tense, their use is not at all systematic. One author, after having presented a neat pattern, admits that "the system is still unstable" (Miller 1985/1986: 165, my translation of the French) and that "[I]t is difficult to identify a coherent [verbal] system used by all the speakers [of Juba Arabic]" (Miller 1987: 301, my translation; 1983). The analysis also of a good amount of extemporaneous speech reveals that **gi** and **bi** are both used to mark the perfective, the perfect, the durative, the progressive, the habitual, the iterative, the conditional, the imperative, and the future. Moreover, "Combined aspectual forms [i.e., using, for example, two particles in the same verb phrase] [...] are commonly used in cases in which it can be determined that only one aspectual subcategory is involved" (Mahmoud 1979: 177, 200). There are parallels in other languages in the way people mark future time and in the way a particular form is socially significant (Samarin 2001). In Juba Arabic the use of **gi** more than any other form "signals that one is speaking (or attempting to speak) Juba Arabic" (Mahmoud 1979: 182). (For a recent study of Juba Arabic see Manfredi 2004/2005.)

The origins of pidgins lie in human creativity, and creativity defies explanation, at least the kind of explanation that one would like to call scientific. When a sculptor is finished with her work, we see what she has produced, but, except for some principles of construction and models for inspiration, we cannot account for the genius in their creation. In the history of Tok Pisin, for example, even after it had become a language, we "can observe a series of experiments where people attempt a whole range of solutions to the problem of expressing some meaning or relationship. [But] the reasons why one strategy has triumphed over another remain to be clarified" (Sankoff 1979: 47). So nothing is learned about "how modern human beings, fully equipped with the modern *faculté de langage*, go about constructing a language," that is, "building a language both in the personal and the institutional senses" (Sankoff 1979: 23). Creating a new language is something like what might happen if one gave a North American football to a group of children who were not familiar with the games of football, soccer, and rugby. They would experiment with the strange object that did not behave like others with which they had had experience. Eventually someone would learn that the ball could be flipped through the air in a certain way for a short distance to another person, and then a clever one would discover that he could put a spin on it and throw it forward over a longer distance. This is the kind of experimentation that must have gone into the creation of pidgins. The process would have been helped, of course, through the 'substratal' influence of a boy who had some experience with the game – playing it or just seeing it being played – in another context.

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