

A BRIEF SKETCH OF CHIMIINI WITH SPECIAL FOCUS ON CONTACT-INDUCED PHENOMENA

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Chimiini is an Eastern Bantu language which until recently was spoken exclusively by inhabitants of Brava, a coastal town of Southern Somalia (hence its alternative name, Bravanese). As illustrated in this paper, it shows traces of contact with northern varieties of Swahili such as Amu, Siu, Pate, and Mvita, to which it is closely related, and also of contact with the Cushitic languages Somali, Tunni, to Bajuni, as well as the Semitic language Arabic, and Italian and English. As further shown below, variation within Chimiini also reflects emblematic features of specific clans and lineages within the speech community. In addition, differences from earlier accounts of this language concerning the interpretation of its phonological and morphosyntactic structure are discussed in this paper.

1. Introduction

Mwiini or Miini (also known as Chimwiini, Chimiini, Chimbalazi, or Bravanese) is a term used for the language in the older scholarly literature, based on the endo-glottonym of what was the primary language of the inhabitants of an urban community. The speakers of Chimiini refer to Brava as *Miini* (lit. ‘in/at the town’), to themselves as *Waantu wa Miini* (lit. ‘people of Miini’), and to their language as *Chi-m^(v)iini* ‘the language (spoken) in the city’. In addition, Chimiini served as a lingua franca with migrants speaking other languages in this urban area, many of whom eventually gave up their primary languages in favour of Chimiini. Nevertheless, individual or family-wide bilingualism is still widely established, particularly with the Arab strata of migrants, but also with a good number of speakers whose families were originally speakers of Tunni (which may be treated as a variety of Somali).

Bravanese society is sub-divided into clans (for which Mwiini speakers use the term *qabiiia*, from Arabic *qabīla* ‘tribe’) and lineages (referred to as *reeri*, from Somali *reer* ‘clan’), some of which show certain idiosyncrasies in their speech both phonologically and morphologically. It should be emphasized that the use of these terms from Arabic and Somali reflect the emic perspective of the Mwiini speech community and not necessarily that of anthropologists. These groups include Haatimi, Bida, Mashariifu, Shangamaasi, Wa-‘Ooji (or Ooji), and the Wa-arabu (or Wa-‘arabu) wa Miini. There are three groups which are identified by the majority of Bravanese as being the result of more recent waves of immigration, namely the Shangamaasi, the Wa-arabu wa Miini, and the Wa-‘Ooji. The Shangamaasi (< Tunni *Shan Gamaas* ‘five clans’) are a Somali lineage of speakers of Af-Tunni, some of whom have become first language speakers of Chimiini. The Wa-arabu wa Miini are groups of people who immigrated in the second

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half of the 19th century from Yemen and Oman. Lastly, there are the Wa-‘Ooj, who are claimed by other Bravanese to be descendants of former slaves. The present article presents data on sociolects collected from speakers belonging to the Haatimi, Bida, and Mashariifu groups, and to a lesser extent from Shangamaasi and Wa-arabu wa Miini.

The large number of loans from Somali and closely-related languages did not necessarily replace inherited lexical material, but instead gave rise to paralexification, i.e. registers involving a significant number of synonyms from which a speaker can choose.¹ In the Tervuren 600 words list (partially elicited with multiple speakers), for example, 72 lexemes have Somali cognates, 70 have Arabic cognates, and 355 have Swahili cognates. Examples include *n-dovu* ‘elephant’ vs. *moroodi* (from Somali *maroodi*); *m-ɿima* ‘hill’ vs. *i-buuri* (Somali *buur*); *n-so* ‘kidney’ vs. *ki.ɿi* (Somali *kelli*); *χ-t̃eiimbi.ɿa* vs. *χ-fakata* ‘to run away’ (Somali *fako*); and *ku-sooto* vs. *t̃ei-gure* ‘left’ (Somali *gure* ‘left-handed’). Occasionally, further lexical choices occur as a result of Arabic borrowings, e.g. *aroʔaaro* (Somali *carocaaro*) vs. *ankabuuti* (from Arabic *‘ankabūt*) ‘spider’. However, it is not always possible to determine which of these languages was the source language.

Heavy borrowing has also resulted in the lexical expression of gender differences for some male and female animal terms. Examples include *mpaka* ‘cat’ vs. *urri* ‘tomcat’ (from Somali *curre*); *mbuzi* ‘goat’ vs. *orāzi* ‘billy/male big goat’ (from Somali *orgi*); *n-kuku* ‘chicken’ vs. *ori* ‘cock/rooster’ (Tunni *ór*); and *ngoombe* ‘cow’ vs. *divi* ‘ox’ (Somali *dibi*).

While Chimiini served as a marker of urban identity within the Bravanese community, it also served as a marker of “Otherness” within Somalia. This Othering (in the sense of Spivak 1985) also led to stigmatization, particularly during the civil wars in Somalia that started in 1990, which in the course of time resulted in the exodus of most Chimiini speakers. The total number of speakers today is not known, but estimates range between 2,000 and 30,000 speakers, with Vianello & Banafunzi (2014: 295) and Nurse (2010) agreeing on a more realistic 10,000-15,000 worldwide. Outside of Brava, the largest communities today are to be found in Mombasa (Kenya), London and Manchester (the U.K.), American cities such as Atlanta (Georgia) and Columbus (Ohio), and states such as Minnesota, U.S.A., and Ontario, Canada.

Today, Chimiini is an endangered language, with most competent speakers outside of Brava being over the age of 35. Younger speakers have only a limited competence in the language, being part of generations of Bravanese born or raised in exile communities where they mostly arrived as refugees.

Chimiini has been treated as a dialect of Swahili, for example in Möhlig (1995) and Nurse & Hinnebusch (1993). However, due to its rather distinct phonological, lexical and grammatical

¹ The term “paralexification” is used by Mous (2003) to characterize the use of alternative registers in the Bantu language Mbugu (Ma’a).

structure it is better treated as a distinct language, particularly because it does not seem to be mutually intelligible with (northern dialects of) Swahili, although no systematic tests were carried out by the present authors in order to substantiate this.

This study presents a general overview of the language; for reasons of space, the syntactic discussion is restricted to typologically and genetically distinctive features of Chimiini. Henderson (2010, 2018) and the pioneering works of Kisseberth (2010) and Kisseberth & Abasheikh (1974, 2004, 2011) provide additional sources on this language. Where the present contribution differs from these latter studies in terms of data or the analysis of specific grammatical phenomena, this is indicated below. An attempt is made here to describe variation among speakers (instead of presenting Mwiini as a monolithic unit); in addition, a number of features are discussed which do not appear to have received attention in earlier studies.

2. Phonology

2.1 Vowels

Chimiini has five short and five long vowel phonemes, as shown by the following (near) minimal pairs (whereby the prefix χ - is an infinitive marker):

- (1) χ -tija² ‘to fear’ χ -tiiʔa ‘to obey’
 χ -teka ‘to laugh’ χ -teeka ‘to pack (an animal)’
 χ -kaia ‘to reside’ k-aaia ‘to sow’
 χ -koa ‘to get warm’ k-ooia ‘to write’
 χ -kuia ‘to grow’ χ -kuuia ‘to take off’

There is some allophonic variation (summarized in Table [1], but not further discussed here) depending on neighbouring consonants as well as on whether or not the vowel occurs in a syllable carrying tonal accent.

Table 1: Chimiini vowels

	unrounded	rounded
high	i [i, ɪ]	u [u, ʊ]
mid	e [e, ɛ]	o [o, ɔ]
low	a	

² Examples/sample sentences are not written in italics in this paper for better readability of IPA symbols.

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Omission of labialization after the nasal *m* occurs before unrounded vowels (*i*, *e*, *a*) with elderly people and Haatimi, e.g. *m^wiini* > *miini* ‘Brava’, or *m^weezi* ~ *meezi* ‘month’. This historical rule appears to be the result of the reinterpretation of the transitional sound *w* between the bilabial consonant and the unrounded vowel as a predictable acoustic effect of the labial consonant. “Another way of describing such behavior is to say that listeners normalize or correct the speech signal in order to arrive at the pronunciation intended by the speaker minus any added contextual perturbations”, as Ohala (1993: 245) calls such hyper-correction phenomena. This process is now being generalized to other vocalic contexts by speakers, as suggested by the variation between *m^wooŋi* and *moofi* ‘smoke’. This loss of labialization historically has also led to the variation in glottonyms for this language, i.e. Chimiini vs. Chimwiini. Although vowel length is phonologically distinctive in Chimiini, as shown by the examples in (1), it is predictable in certain environments due to the operation of metrical rules, as further discussed in Section 2.3 below.

2.2 Consonants

Chimiini has 34 simple consonant phonemes and 13 pre-nasalized consonant phonemes. Among the 34 simple consonants, as summarized in Table (2), one set of consonants resulted from (partly) unadapted borrowing from languages such as Arabic, Somali, and Tunni. The latter two share a large number of phonemes with Arabic and have many borrowings from this language, which occasionally complicates the identification of the original source and path of borrowing in Chimiini. Table (2) below summarizes the simple consonants of Chimiini; phonemes marked with an asterisk (*) are borrowed phonemes with a more limited distribution.

Table 2: Simple consonant phonemes of Chimiini

type/place	bilabial	labio-dental	inter-dental	apico-alveolar	lamino-alveolar	(post-) alveolar (-pal.)	palatal	velar	uvular	pharyngeal	glottal
plosive	p b			ṭ ḍ	t d			k g	q*		ʔ*
implosive				d*							
affricate						ṭẹ ḍʒ̣					
fricative		f v	θ* ð*		s z	ʃ		ɣ*	χ	ħ* ʕ*	h
nasal	m			ɱ	n		ɲ	ŋ			
trill					r						
approximant		ʋ		ɹ			j	w			
lateral approx.					l						

When comparing this inventory with earlier studies such as Kisseberth & Abasheikh (2004), a number of differences can be identified. Their bilabial β is considered here an allophonic realization of intervocalic /b/, as in *baabe* ~ [βá:βè] (also pronounced as [vá:vè] ‘my father’), where the intervocalic /b/ has been weakened, with a subsequent regressive assimilation of the initial /b/. This parallels southern varieties of Somali (Saeed 1999: 8-9), where intervocalic stops tend to be weakened and changed into fricatives or approximants.³ There is significant variation for /v/, as in [lbávà] (mostly for Bida and the Wa’ili lineage of the Bida as well as for some Haatimi), [lbáβà] (mostly Haatimi), or [lbáwà] ‘wing’.

The distinction between apico-alveolar and lamino-alveolar consonants in Chimiini is well-established for plosives and pre-nasalized stops, but rare (and probably limited to only a small number of speakers) for nasals:

Apico-alveolar	Lamino-alveolar
(2) ʃᵗᵐbi ‘canoe’	ʃtumbi ‘small digging/excavation’
mᵗúungi ‘composer’	mtuungi ‘(clay) pot’
nᵗa ‘candle’	nta ‘point (of a knife)’
nᵗe ‘long’	nde ‘outside’
ᵑumba ‘house’	nuumba ‘create me’

Kisseberth & Abasheikh (2004) describe the lamino-alveolar set as dental, and the apico-alveolar set as coronal. Based on the realization by our consultants, the salient differences between the (pre-nasalized) stops in fact is not a difference in dentality but in the point of contact of the tongue, using either the tip or the blade⁴. The lamino-alveolar plosives /t/ and /d/ can indeed be realized with the tongue making contact with the teeth. This dental realization, however, is optional and is dependent on the speaker as well as the phonetic environment, according to our information. Since both Somali and Tunni realize these plosives as dentals [ᵗ] and [ᵗ] (Saeed 1999: 8-9; Tosco 1997: 17), this optional dentality may be a feature of language contact. In the present contribution, these lamino-alveolar stops are represented as *t*, *d*, *nt*, and *nd*, whereas the apico-alveolar set are represented by a subscript (*t*, *nt*, and *nd*); this latter subscript should not be confused with the dental subscript _ᵗ used by Kisseberth & Abasheikh (2004), which represents an optional feature of the lamino-alveolar set in the current study.

Most speakers realize voiced apico-alveolar stops in Chimiini with a strong fricativization (or retroflexed rhotacization) as secondary articulation, in particular after nasals, e.g. /muunda/ → [mú:nᵗà]. This is also a feature of northern Swahili dialects; see Nurse & Hinnebusch

³ The same intervocalic weakening may also have led to the loss of the velar stop *g, as in the word for ‘leg’, *ku-u.u* (< **mu-gudu*), as pointed out by Nurse & Hinnebusch (1993: 107-108).

⁴ This analysis is based on discussions and articulatory experiments with language consultants as well as a descriptive phonetical process based on intro-spective perception, however no laboratory measurements could be conducted.

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[1993: 234]. The corresponding voiceless apico-alveolar stop may also be realized with strong aspiration, e.g. /'ntátu/ → [ntʰátʰù] ‘three’. As shown by this example, rhotacization may also occur with the voiceless apico-alveolar stop. Interestingly, Chimiini shares this phonetic realization rule for apico-alveolar stops with Shinghazidja (see Lafon [1988] for a description) and the Amu dialect of Swahili (Derek Nurse, p.c.). The affricates $\widehat{tɕ}$ and $\widehat{dʒ}$ structurally fill the slot for palatal stops.

The approximant /ɹ/ (rendered as plain *l* in the data presented by Kisseberth & Abasheikh 2004) is in structural opposition with /l/ (rendered as underlined \underline{l} in the representation used by Kisseberth & Abasheikh [2004]). In addition, there is a trill, /r/.

The consonants /θ/, /ð/, /d/ (represented as *dh* in corresponding Somali examples, where it tends to be realized as a retroflex or glottalized consonant depending on the dialect), /y/ (represented as \dot{g} in Arabic examples), /q/, and intervocalic /ʔ/ are primarily associated with the influx of Somali, Tunni, and Arabic loanwords (the Arabic borrowings sometimes having been borrowed via Somali and Tunni).

(3)	ðulmu	< Arabic <i>zulum</i>	‘deceit’
	dāyaara	< Somali <i>dhegala</i>	‘deaf’
	qaaði ~ χáaði	< Arabic <i>qāḍī</i>	‘judge’
	yaali	< Arabic <i>gālī</i>	‘expensive’
	χsaaida	< Arabic <i>sā’ada</i> (‘he helped’)	‘to help’

For some speakers (mostly Wa-arabu wa Miini and some Bida), ζ (represented as *c* in the Somali orthography and as ζ in Arabic examples) and \hbar (represented as *x* in Somali and as \hbar in Arabic examples) are phonologically distinct from the glottal stop ʔ (which is only represented intervocalically in our transcription) and *h* for some speakers, whereas for others these are free variants, e.g. [ðàʕí:fù] ~ [ðàʔí:fù] (from Somali *daciif* or Arabic *ḍaʕīf*⁵) ‘weak’, [huzni] ~ [ħuzni] (Arabic *ḥuzn*) ‘sorrow’.

Intervocalically, consonants may be simple or geminated, but the latter can only be preceded by short vowels.

(4)	huuri	‘sweat’
	hurri	‘free’

⁵ We express our thanks to an anonymous peer reviewer, who informed us that many Yemeni and Omani dialects have [ð^s]aʕīf for this word.

In addition, sequences of (non-homorganic) nasal plus obstruent may occur intervocalically as well as word-initially. Some examples:

- (5) mkono ‘hand, arm’
 humkina ‘possibly’
 mnaazi ‘coconut tree’
 dumna ‘game of Domino’
 mpuunḡa ‘donkey’
 t̄ampa ‘stamp, trademark’
 mraadi ‘goal, purpose’
 amri ‘order, command’

These latter sequences contrast with sequences involving nasals with the same point of articulation as the following consonant. This nasal is written as *n* in the present study except before bilabial stops, where it is written as *m*. However, all of these nasals are homorganic.

Table 3: Homorganic C₁C₂ sequences in Chimiini (see also ex. 6)

type/place	bilabial		labio-dental	apico-alveolar		lamino-alveolar		palatal	velar	
plosive	mb	mp		n̄t̄	n̄ḡ	nt	nd		nk	ng
affricate							nd̄ʒ			
fricative			nf	ns	nz					
approximant								nj		

- (6) mbu ‘mosquito’ kiimba ‘to sing’
 mpaampa ‘shark’ t̄ampa ‘stamp, trademark’
 nfuje ‘monkey’ siinfa ‘shark oil’
 ntiini ‘down’ muunti ‘daylight’
 nde ‘outside’ χsoonda ‘to suck’
 nd̄ʒeema ‘good’ muund̄ʒo ‘type of insect’
 n̄to ‘very much’ muunt̄u ‘person’
 nḡe ‘long’ ku.iinda ‘to wait’
 nsi ‘fish’ χaansa ‘especially’
 nzi ‘house fly’ magoroonzi ‘snore(s)’
 nkara ‘crab’ inkaari ‘curse’
 ngoroonzi ‘(a) snore’ lpaanga ‘sword’
 njaanja ‘tomato’ ibanja ‘open (outer) space’

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Word-initially, additional clusters are possible in Chimiini as a result of a historical process of vowel removal before voiceless obstruents (aphaeresis), more specifically before *p, f, s, t, t̥, t̥e, ʃ, k*. This occurs systematically in the case of infinitive marking, for example: *ku-* → *χ*, e.g. *χ-paṭa* ‘to find/get’, *χ-t̥iimbi.ɪa* ‘to run away’, *χ-tiinda* ‘to cut’, *χ-t̥apika* ‘to vomit’, *χ-siifa* ‘to praise’. Consonantal allomorphs of class 7 (*t̥e-i/-f-*) and 8 (*zi-/s-*) result in additional clusters, which will be illustrated in the discussion of noun classes below.

In addition to these, Chimiini has also integrated a large number of (unaltered) clusters in borrowed lexemes, mostly taken from Arabic, Somali or Tunni, and occasionally from English, Italian and Farsi (Persian). These involve sequences of obstruents or sequences of sonorants plus obstruents.

(7) iḏni	< Arabic <i>ẓulm</i>	‘permission, sanction’
maḏhabu	< Arabic <i>maḏhab</i>	‘religious school of Islam’
maʃyuuuli	< Arabic <i>mašgūl</i>	‘busy’
ahdi	< Arabic <i>‘ahd</i>	‘promise’
mahkama	< Arabic <i>maḥkama</i>	‘tribunal’
waḫti	< Arabic <i>waqt</i>	‘time’
altente	< Italian <i>aiutante</i> ‘helper’	‘driver’
huzni	< Arabic <i>ḥuzn</i>	‘sorrow’
i-baalḏi	< Somali <i>baalḏi</i>	‘bucket’
sarbi	< Somali <i>serbi</i>	‘stick (especially used to beat students)’
sharti	< Arabic <i>šart</i>	‘condition, stipulation’

2.3 The prosodic system

The pitch-accent system of Chimiini has been discussed extensively in a series of articles by Kisseberth (e.g. 2010) and Kisseberth & Abasheikh (e.g. 2011), where it is argued that “[a]ccent falls on the final vowel in certain morphosyntactic contexts, otherwise on the penult. This accent is phrasal in nature: it is the final or penult vowel in the last word in the phrase that bears accent” (Kisseberth & Abasheikh 2011: 1987).

This claim is confirmed by our corpus. However, we prefer not to treat tonal accent in Chimiini as an entirely phrasal phenomenon. Whereas the prosodic structure of words and the prosodic structure of phrases in Mwiini both express relative prominence, tonal prominence within words is to be understood in terms of foot structure, while phrasal prosody is to be understood in terms of phonological phrasing and the distribution of pitch accents, as further discussed below.

While there is a tendency for long vowels in words to carry the tonal accent, there are numerous exceptions where vocalic length occurs in the syllable which does *not* bear the tonal accent, as in nouns like *ikoofija* ‘hat’, *saambávu* ‘lungs’, or verbs with perfect formation such as *taanz-í.ɛ* < *χ-táanda* ‘to insult’.

Chimiini allows for one high peak per word, unless specific enclitics carrying their own pitch accent are added. Penultimate accent presents the default case both at the word level and at the phrasal level. The tonal accent may also be assigned to monomoraic words, whereby the initial nasal in Chimiini does not count as a moraic unit, contrary to Standard Swahili, where the nasal becomes a segment carrying stress, thereby creating a bimoraic foot, as illustrated in example (8). Note that in our data the tonal accent is generally realized as high-low or falling when such monomoraic words occur in isolation.

(8)	Chimiini		Swahili	
	ntí	[ntî]	ńchi	‘country’
	mbá	[mbâ]	mbwa	‘dog’

Next to a change in pitch, pitch accents in Chimiini are also characterized by other features of prominence, such as increased loudness and greater duration⁶. In isolation, disyllabic and trisyllabic words receive penultimate accent, which is marked by a high tone in all major word classes, as shown in (9), (10) and (11).

(9)	úḍze	[ʔúḍzè]	‘that (class 1)’
	hábbá	[háb:à]	‘few’
	kúu-ja	[‘kú:jà]	‘to come’
(10)	miimbí.ɪ	[mì:mbí.ɪ]	‘boy’
	wa-kú.ɹu	[wákú:ù]	‘large, big (for class 2 nouns)’
	kurú.uda	[kùrú:ḍa]	‘return’
	daaʔimu	[dà:ʔímò]	‘always’
(11)	*ta-ku-kássa	→	ta-χ-kássa
	FUT-INF-hear		FUT-INF-hear
	‘(S)he will hear (it).’		

⁶ This analysis is based on the authors’ perception and judgement, as well as single ad-hoc acoustic measurements, however no systematic measurements across a corpus were conducted.

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Kisseberth & Abasheikh (2011) argue that accent assignment in Chimiini is phrasal in nature. The first piece of evidence comes from encliticized morphemes, which affect the assignment of tone accent, as in the following example:

- (12) ú-so → u-sóo=v-a
 14-face 14-face=14-POSS_{1SG}
 ‘face’ ‘my face’

According to Kisseberth & Abasheikh (2011: 1990-1992), the accent falls on the final syllable in the following morphosyntactic contexts:

1. first and second person subject verbs in the present and past tenses;
2. a relative verb in all tenses;
3. conditional verbs with the prefix *ka-*;
4. negative imperative verbs;
5. complements following the conjunction *na*.

In our data, additional morphosyntactic contexts occur which demand final accent assignment, e.g. with possessive marking of certain kinship terms, e.g. *jaajâ* ‘my aunt’. Such final syllables carrying a falling tone can be preceded by a syllable featuring a long vowel, such as *fakeetê* ‘you (sg.) ran’.

Prosodic boundaries may occur between subject and predicate (in non-verbal constructions) or verb, between main verb and complement phrase, or between topic and main predications. Kisseberth & Abasheikh (2011: 1999) claim that these phonological phrases (separated by a slash in the cited examples) are not necessarily syntactic phrases. But this would seem to depend on one’s concept of syntax. Kisseberth & Abasheikh (2011: 2005-2007) provide an interesting discussion of the role played by pitch accent in focus marking, for example. When the verb carries focus, it constitutes an independent phonological phrase separated prosodically from a following object complement or prepositional phrase. The following examples are from Kisseberth & Abasheikh (2011: 2002):

- (13a) n̄ta-k-éenda numbáa=ni
 NEG.SP₁-INF-go 9.home=LOC
 ‘(s)he did not go home’

- (13b) n̄ta-k-en̄da numbáa=ni
 NEG.SP₁-INF-go 9.home=LOC
 ‘(s)he did not go *home* (i.e. (s)he went somewhere else, not home)’

By claiming that these constructions are syntactically identical, the conclusion is indeed that phonological phrases do not necessarily correspond to syntactic phrases. But the Chimiini data strongly suggest that grammatically these constructions are *not* identical. The referring expressions (here the verb and the locative complement) perform different roles in terms of the syntactic model proposed by Van Valin & LaPolla (1997), where it is observed that “topic” and “focus” are the two primary information statuses that referring expressions may have in an utterance. The locative complement in example (13b) carries (contrastive) focus, whereas (13a) is a thetical (rather than a categorical) statement where no constituent is selected for topic or focus. In other words, the configurations in (13a) and (13b) are controlled by semantics, not by syntax.

Historically, these alternations presumably are reflexes of the conjoint/disjoint distinction elsewhere in Bantu. In a recent study, van der Wal (2017: 15) points out that “[t]he conjoint/disjoint alternation is an alternation between verb forms that are formally distinguishable, that are associated with an information-structural difference in the interpretation of verb and/or following element and of which one form is not allowed in sentence-final position.” This also applies to Mwiini; while the verb form in (14a) can occur in sentence-final position (expressing ‘you don’t have it’), the form in (14b) cannot.

- | | | | |
|-------|-----------------------------|--|---------|
| (14a) | we | n̄tu-naa-z-ó | peesá |
| | PRON _{2SG} | NEG.HAB.SP _{2SG} -be_with-OP ₉ -POSS | 9.money |
| | ‘You don’t have the money.’ | | |
| | | | |
| (14b) | we | n̄tu-na | péesa |
| | PRON _{2SG} | NEG.HAB.SP _{2SG} -be_with | 9.money |
| | ‘You don’t have money.’ | | |

3. Nouns and noun phrases

3.1 Noun classes

Chimiini has retained most of the noun classes reconstructed for Proto-Bantu, including the distinction between classes 11 and 14. The class 15 prefix, *ku-/k-/χ-*, is only used to form infinitives. Reflexes of the locative classes 16, 17, and 18 are also found, albeit in a remnant form, as illustrated below. Noun classes and the concordance markers indicating agreement on dependent categories as well as cross-referencing on the verb are summarized in Table (4). In this table, LOC represents agreement markers on locative copulas, which are also discussed below.

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Table 4: Noun classes and agreement markers in Chimiini

NC	On nouns	On possessives/ concordance markers	On adjectives	On demonstratives	On numerals	On locatives	On verbs as subjects	On verbs as objects
1	mu- ~ m-	-w-	m-	-j-	∅-	u-	∅-	m-
2	wa- ~ w-	-w-	wa- ~ w-	-w-	wa-	wa-	wa- ~ w-	wa-
3	mu- ~ m-	-w-	m-	-j-	∅-	u-	u- ~ ∅-	-- ⁷
4	mi-	-j-	mi- ~ m-	-j-	mi-	ja-	ja- ~ j-	ja- ~ j-
5	i- ~ ∅ ~ ji-	-j-	i- ~ j-	-j-	i-	ji- ~ ii-	i- ~ ∅-	i- ~ j-
6	ma-	-j-	ma- ~ m-	-j-	ma-	ja-	ja- ~ j-	ja- ~ j-
7	te- ~ f-	-te-	tei- ~ f-	-te-	tei-	tei-	te- ~ te- ~ f-	tei- ~ te- ~ f-
8	zi- ~ s-	-z-	zi- ~ s-	-z-	zi-	zi-	zi- ~ z- ~ s-	zi- ~ z- ~ s-
9	N- ~ ∅	-j-	N- ~ ∅- ~ j-	-j-	∅-	ii-	i- ~ j- ~ ∅-	i- ~ j- ~ ∅-
10	N- ~ ∅	-z-	zi- ~ s-	-z-	N-	zi-	zi- ~ z- ~ s-	zi- ~ z- ~ s-
11	l-	-l-	l-	-l-	l-	li-	l-	l-
14	u-	-w-	m-	-j- ~ -w-	-- ⁸	vii- ~ u-	-- ⁷	-- ⁷

The following examples illustrate the most common singular (singulative) and plural (collective) alternations.

(15) Class 1/2

mu-ke	wa-ke	‘woman/women’
m-aana	w-aana	‘child/children’
mu-bd̥ʒaana	wa-bd̥ʒaana	‘boy(s)’

(16) Class 3/4

mu-t̥ʃi	mi-t̥ʃi	‘tree(s)’
m-kono	mi-kono	‘arm(s)’

(17) Class 5/6

i-d̥ʒiwe	ma-d̥ʒiwe	‘stone(s)’
∅-ina	ma-ʔina	‘name(s)’

⁷ Not attested in our corpus.

⁸ Not countable.

Nouns borrowed from Arabic or Somali with an initial /d̪z/ are allocated to class 5/6:

- (18) i-d̪zaraha ma-d̪zaraha ‘wound(s)’ (Arabic *jarḥ*)
 i-d̪zilibu ma-d̪zilibu ‘knee(s)’ (Somali *jilib*)

- (19) Class 7/8
 t̪ei-ɪaʈu zi-ɪaʈu ‘shoe(s)’
 t̪e-uɪa z-uɪa ‘frog(s)’
 ʃ-kapu s-kapu ‘basket(s)’

- (20) Class 9/10
 n-zi n-zi ‘fly/flies’
 m-puɪa m-puɪa ‘nose(s)’
 siindanu siindanu ‘needle(s)’

Class 9/10 nouns that feature an onset with a voiceless plosive are systematically aspirated. Where this onset is a labial or velar voiceless plosive, this aspiration is frequently mutated into a nasal release, e.g. [ɪnk̚à:ˈmbáɪà] ‘ropes’, and labials in particular remain unreleased, e.g. [ɪmp̚ɪà] ‘nose’.

- (21) Class 11/10
 l-paanga m-paanga ‘sword(s)’
 l-imi nɔ̄-imi ‘tongue(s)’

Class 14 nouns tend to refer to abstract concepts (e.g. *u-suura* ‘beauty’) or masses (e.g. *u-nga* ‘flour’) and usually lack a corresponding plural. Occasionally a corresponding plural is found in class 6:

- (22) u-so ma-ʔuso ‘face(s)’

There is a marginal class pairing 5/4, whereby an allomorph *ji-* is employed to mark a singulative in class 5 and a collective noun in class 4.

- (23) mi-ʃpa ‘bones’ ji-ʃpa ‘bone’
 mii-no ‘teeth’ jii-no ‘tooth’

This conceptualization of number or mass is reminiscent of the transnumeral (general number) system with corresponding singulative marking in Cushitic (see Corbett [2000: 10-13] for a discussion).

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Non-alternating nouns may occur in all classes except class 1/2.

(24)	Class 3	mu-nu	‘salt’
	Class 4	m-iiko	‘kitchen’
	Class 5	i-ziwa	‘milk’
	Class 6	ma-ne	‘urine’
	Class 7	te-ai	‘tea’
	Class 8	zi-ta	‘war’
	Class 9	suukari	‘sugar’
	Class 10	nd-ooŋo	‘dream(s)’
	Class 11	l-baani	‘incense’
	Class 14	u-nga	‘flour’

Although Chimiini has retained the locative classes 16, 17, and 18 in a number of constructions, it does not feature locative markers on nouns, nominal modifiers, or verbs. This may be interpreted as a case of “negative borrowing”, as such structural features are also absent from neighbouring non-Bantu languages. Classes 17 and 18 only occur as locative markers; *-ko* indicates a non-specific place, whereas *-mo* indicates an interior location.

(25)	mi	nii-ko	numbáa=ni
	PRON _{1SG}	SP _{1SG} -COP.LOC ₁₇	9.house=LOC
	‘I’m at the house.’		

(26)	mi	nii-mo	numbáa=ni
	PRON _{1SG}	SP _{1SG} -COP.LOC ₁₈	9.house=LOC
	‘I’m in(side) the house.’		

In the sociolect spoken by inhabitants of Baghdadi, and supposedly in the sociolect of Wa-‘Ooji, the class 16 locative morpheme *-po* seems to exist only in fixed constructions such as *apoo sapo* ‘at that point/time’ and *ka paapo* ‘immediately’, on locative copulas and demonstrative pronouns. In other speakers’ varieties, these noun classes occur only in locational or adverbial deictics (in the sense of Diessel [2006]), which can be proximal, i.e. *apa* ‘here’, *oko* ‘there’, *omo* ‘inside there’, or distal, i.e. *apad̄ze* ‘there/a short time ago’, *okud̄ze* ‘(over) there’, *omud̄ze* ‘inside there’.

The noun *kuzimu* ‘sky (place of the spirits)’ contains a petrified locative noun class 17 marker *ku-*. However, synchronically it is treated as a class 9 noun, as shown by the agreement on the connective in the following example:

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database, nor are they recognized by consultants. In such cases speakers would use a construction containing *meje* ‘owner, possessor of’, e.g. *meje duka* ‘shop keeper’, which is a general strategy encountered where other nominalizations are impossible.

Heavy borrowing from Somali has resulted in the presence of at least four borrowed derivational suffixes on nouns, namely *-ie* ‘owing, possessing’ (Somali *-le*), *-ia* ‘lacking, deprived of’ (Somali *-la ~ -la'*), *-dara*, a privative or antonym marker for Somali feminine nouns (Somali *-dara ~ -darro*), and *-nimo*, denoting a quality or state (Somali *-nimo*) (Zorc & Osman 1993). However, there are also a number of examples where these are manifested on Somali loans where such combinations are not attested in standard Somali (parallel to the heavy borrowing from Latin or Greek in English, where affixes such as *de-* have led to the innovation of new forms such as *de-hydrate* or *de-compose*).

(34)	id̥ʒinii- <i>ie</i>	‘crazy’	< <i>id̥ʒinni</i> ‘ghost, spirit’ (< Somali <i>jinni</i> and Arabic <i>ǧinn</i>)
	adabdara	‘improper behaviour’	< <i>adabu</i> ‘(fine) education, good manners, discipline’ (via Somali <i>edeb</i> and Arabic <i>adab</i>)
	d̥aɡaa- <i>ia</i>	‘deaf’	< Somali <i>dhegala</i> ‘deaf’ and <i>dheg</i> ‘ear’
	aduwinimo	‘enmity’	< <i>aduwi</i> ‘enemy’ (< Somali <i>cadaawe</i> and Arabic (<i>adw</i>))

Other types of nominal derivation, such as nominalization of verbs, are not discussed in the present text for reasons of space.

3.2 Nominal modifiers

Nominal modifiers tend to follow their heads in Chimiini, with the basic word order being Noun–Demonstrative–Quantifier–Adjective.

(35)	n-umba	izi	m-bii	m-pija	zi-na-k-uz-oowa
	10-house	10.DEM _{PROX}	10-two	10-new	SP ₁₀ -PROG-INF-sell-PASS
	‘These two new houses are for sale.’				

For some nominal modifiers, the word order may differ. While adjectives always follow the head, demonstratives can be placed before the head noun: Demonstratives must precede head nouns when the latter are modified by relative clauses, e.g. *úḍʒe miúuntú waa sískoðeleeló haɣaadiri* ‘that guy of whom we spoke is ill’. However, speakers can also change the order for pragmatic reasons such as focus (e.g. *i-ḍʒe daɣtari=jo n-ka.ii* ‘that competent (lit. sharp) doctor of yours’). In addition, some quantifiers (but not all) must precede the head noun, for example *kulla* (~*killa*), as in *kulla nuumba* ‘every house’, or *hatta* ‘(not) even’ as in *hatta t̥eiintu* ‘nothing’.

Nominal possessives of the structure “A of B” are expressed using connectives formed by the concordance marker (as shown in Table [4] in the column CON) plus an invariable vowel *-a*. With pronominal possessives, the singular is marked by a suffix which consists of the same concordance markers employed for connectives plus a vowel *-a*, *-o*, or *-e*, for first, second, and third persons, respectively, e.g. *ma-shungi-j-a*, *ma-shungi-j-o*, *ma-shungi-j-e* (6-hair-6-POSS_{1, 2, 3SG}) ‘my, your, his/her hair’.

For kinship terms, however, the concordance marker has been neutralized in most singular forms, with two sets of vocalic suffixes being employed. One set is used only for the terms *maama* ‘mother’, *waawa* ‘father’, and *daada* ‘grandmother’, i.e. *maam-é*, *maam-ó*, *maama -j-é* ‘my, your, his/her mother’; only in *mamaye* has the concordance marker remained. The other set is used for all other kinship terms, e.g. *mbud̄ɔ́-á*, *mbud̄ɔ́-ó*, *mbud̄ɔ́-é* ‘my, your, his/her sibling of opposite sex’. In the plural, all pronominal possessives are again formed by a concordance marker plus a possessive marker *-iitu*, *-iinyu*, *-aawo* for first, second, and third person plural, respectively. These latter can stand freely or (particularly after prepositions) be attached to the previous element, e.g. [...] *w-aana wa Baghdaadi mba.i =j-aawo* [...] ‘the children of Baghdaadi – in between/among them [...]’.

Whereas, in Swahili, head marking by way of pronominal possessives on the noun is restricted to kinship terms, the same strategy can be used for a wider range of possessive constructions in Chimiini, as shown by the following example, where ‘guards’ takes an enclitic third person singular possessive marker showing co-reference with the noun expressing the possessor (‘sultan’), which precedes it. Nevertheless, the noun ‘(the) guards’ also triggers subject agreement or cross-reference marking on the verb.

- (36) Sultáani ma-waardíja=j-e wa-t̄ei-m-aamb-íia [...]

sultan 6-guard=6-POSS_{3SG} SP₂-NARR-OP₁-tell-PRF

‘The sultan’s guards told him [...].’

This construction parallels one of two construction types encountered in Somali, where the nomen rectum is marked for possessive, i.e. where head marking occurs, as in the following example adapted from Saeed (1999: 175):

- (37) Cáli gúri-g-iis-a

Ali.ABS house-M-POSS_{3M}-DET.ABS

‘Ali’s house (lit. Ali his house)’

Taking the example of the root *-zima* ‘whole, complete’, it can be used as an adjective, as in *muun̄tu mzima* ‘adult (lit. whole, complete person)’, but also as a quantifying noun ‘wholeness, entirety’, in which case this noun must be marked for co-referentiality with the preceding noun (*nuumba* in example 38) by means of a pronominal possessive:

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- (38) n-úumba n-zimáa=j-é í-burbuf-íie
 9-house 9-whole=9-POSS SP₉-collapse-PRF
 ‘The entire house (lit. house its entirety/entirety) collapsed.’

Chimiini distinguishes between proximal, distal and anaphoric demonstratives; for further details see Nurse (1982: 92-93). Kisseberth & Abasheikh (2004: XXVII) also present a set of ‘strong demonstratives’ occurring in reduplicated form, which our consultants only recognize in fixed constructions for first to third persons singular and plural, with the meaning ‘by oneself’, e.g. *mi ka miimi* ‘me by myself’, as well as very occasionally for the anaphoric demonstrative of class 1, *joojo* and classes 8 and 10, i.e. *ziizo*.

An interesting structural property where this language differs from Swahili is in the use of a reduced form of the proximative and anaphoric demonstratives (glossed here as SAD for “shortened anaphoric demonstrative” and mostly formed by dropping the initial vocalic syllable, such as *ijo* becoming *jo*) as a kind of specifier or definiteness marker. In bound forms, these occur regularly as enclitics to certain particles, such as the focus particle *ndi*:

- (39) [...] sababu Biruuni ndi=jo kati na kati mabeena
 9.reason Biruuni FOC.COP=9.SAD in the middle between
 z-iino izi zi-wi:ii
 10-goal 10.DEM_{PROX} 10-two
 ‘[...] since Biruuni is (lit. it is that, which is) in the middle between the two goals.’

The reduced demonstratives also feature as enclitics on the coordinator *na* in coordinate phrases.

- (40) [...] naa=jo gruppó hu-fiind-o
 and/with=9.SAD group HAB-win-REL
 ‘[...] and that group which wins’

When subjects of relative clauses are topicalized, the same shortened anaphoric demonstratives are used by speakers in recognitional use (in the sense of Diessel [2006] and Himmelmann [1996]), e.g. when picking up a previously mentioned entity in discourse:

- (41) o m-uuntu | na-χ-tez-ó karka ijo gruppó
 1.SAD 1-man | PROG-INF-play-REL in(side) 9.DEM_{ANA} group
 j-a kaanda [...]
 9-CON first
 ‘That person, who is playing in that first group, [...]’

In unbound forms, the reduced anaphoric pronouns are only attested for some classes in our corpus. These include class 1 (*muuntu o* ‘that person’), class 3 (*mnaango u* ‘this door’), class 7 (*teo teiiko* ‘that thing’), class 8 (*zo ziiko* ‘those things’), class 9 (*nuumba jo* ‘that house’), class 10 (*nuumba zo* ‘those houses’), class 11 (*luji lo* ‘that stick’), and class 14 (*waqti o* ‘that time’). Also, the reduced proximal demonstratives are attested only for the pragmatically most salient classes, whose nouns occur frequently as verbal subjects, i.e. class 1 (*muuntu u* ‘this person’), and also class 3 – *mnaango u* ‘this door’). However, not all speakers accept all forms, and the widest agreement in this respect is found for forms of those noun classes with the highest frequency and/or degree of animacy, i.e. classes 1/2 as well as 5/6 and 7/8 (which also happen to be productively employed for class shifting in order to express diminutives and augmentatives). The same strategy (with a reduced demonstrative) is used to introduce headless relative clauses in topicalized position:

- (42) *teó teii-ko karka háawa | tei-bigá (...)*
 9.SAD SP9-COP.LOC₁₇ in(side) air | SIT-hit
 ‘That which is in the air – if one hits (it) [...]’.

There are two sets of numerals: the first set is similar to the system known from Swahili, while the other is based on the Arabic model. For example, as well as the numeral *mooji* for ‘one’, as a general quantifier, a secondary numeral *muusi* is used in counting.

- (43) *ajaama iji ata ajaama iji ni muusi*
 9.mark 9.DEM_{PROX} until 9.mark 9.DEM_{PROX} COP one
 ‘From this to this mark it’s first (in eliciting delimitations of a field in a game).’

This formal difference – which may be more widespread in coastal Bantu languages – has probably been replicated from Somali; the latter language has three numerals for ‘one’, namely *kow* (used for counting or telling the time, like *muusi* in Chimiini), *hal* (used as a general quantifier), and *mid* (a partitive specifier indicating an item singled out from a set of many [Saeed 1999: 70]), both corresponding to *mooji* in Chimiini.

Chimiini has also borrowed the numeric category of dual from Arabic, e.g. *mija* ‘100’ vs. *mijateeni* ‘200’ (originally from Arabic *mi’atayni*), and *alfu* ‘1000’ vs. *alfeeni* ‘2000’ (< Arabic ‘*alfayni*). At the same time, and depending on the range of numbers and the speakers, there is a choice between either Arabic or the Eastern Bantu forms for the range 10-19 (e.g. *idaafara* vs. *ikumi na mooji* ‘eleven’) as well as for combined numerals between 100 and 1000 (e.g. *thalaθa mia* vs. *mija ntaṭu* ‘300’), and between 10,000 and 1,000,000 (e.g. *idafara alfu* vs. *alfu ikumi na mooji* ‘11,000’, *ifiriin alfu* vs. *alfu ifiriini* ‘20,000’, *mijat alfu* vs. *alfu mija* ‘100,000’). The word order within combined numerals is inverted for Arabic-based numerals (due to a different basic constituent order, namely dependent-head, in Arabic). This, however, does not

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affect the word order beyond the numeral, e.g. *ngoombe idaa fara* or *ngoombe ikumi na mooji* ‘eleven cows’.

Adjectives like *-pija* ‘new’ show full class agreement with the head noun.

- (44) m-eeza m-pija ‘new friend’
 t̄ei-buuku f-pija ‘new book’
 l-kaanda l-pija ‘new belt’

With other adjectives, such as *-gobbe* ‘short’ (< Somali *gaab* ‘shortness’), syncretism occurs, resulting in class 7/8 agreement irrespective of the class of the head noun.

- (45) m-uuntu t̄ei-gobbe ‘short person’
 w-aantu zi-gobbe ‘short people/persons’
 l-imi t̄ei-gobbe ‘short tongue’
 nd-imi zi-gobbe ‘short tongues’

A third group of adjectives shows no agreement at all, as with *χatari* (< Arabic *kaṭar* or *ḥaṭar*) ‘dangerous’.

- (46) m-uvli χatari ‘dangerous man’
 n-dira χatari ‘dangerous road’

Interestingly, adjectives in which syncretism occurs, as well as invariable adjectives, can both show distinctive agreement with augmentative nouns or nouns of class 5/6, and more rarely with diminutive nouns or class 7/8 nouns, e.g. as shown in (47-48).

- (47) ma-juungi-j-o ni ma-gobbe
 6-hair-6-POSS_{2SG} COP 6-short
 ‘Your thick hair is short.’

- (48) zi-bd̄zaana ni s-χataari
 8-young_man COP 8-dangerous
 ‘Small young men are dangerous.’

There seems to be a trend among speakers to move away from a singular vs. plural pairing for all classes to a general plural in class 6 or 10, with only class-shifted forms (class 7/8) or animate nouns (class 1/2) showing distinctive forms in the plural. Nominal modifiers follow this system, with verbs already showing zero marking as the default for most tenses and for all classes but 1 and 2, except in monitored speech. Consider the following example, where a primary language speaker produced two utterances as alternatives, but found himself unable to tell the difference. Whereas the second shows co-referring agreement on the adjective (i.e. the class 9 agreement marking *m-pija* instead of class 11, *l-pija*), both show co-referring agreement on the

demonstratives (class 9 *iji* instead of class 11 *ili*), a case of syncretism caused presumably by the high frequency of class 9 nouns:

(49)	ni	iji	l-kaanda	iji	ndii=lo
	COP	9.DEM _{PROX}	11-belt	9.DEM _{PROX}	FOC.COP=11.SAD
	l-piija	laakini	ilid̥ze	ni	χadiimu
	11-new	but	11.DEM _{DIST}	COP	old

Alternatively:

(50)	ni	iji	l-kaanda	iji	ndii=lo
	COP	9.DEM _{PROX}	11-belt	9.DEM _{PROX}	FOC.COP=11.SAD
	m-pija	laakini	ilid̥ze	ni	χadiimu
	9-new	but	11.DEM _{DIST}	COP	old

‘It is this one – it is this belt which is new, but the other one is old.’

4. Verbs and their syntactic frames

Conjugated verbs, in their most complex form, consist of a negation marker, a subject prefix, a TAM marker, object prefix, a verb base (consisting of a verb root plus derivational suffixes), and a final vowel, as in the following example:

(51)	n̥ta-wa-na-ku-wa-siifa
	NEG-SP ₂ -PROG-INF-OP ₂ -praise
	‘They are not praising them.’

With perfect tense marking, the final vowel is replaced by a suffix with variable forms (causing imbrication, parallel to what is found in other Bantu languages). Chimiini employs five derivational suffixes on the verb, which are used either to introduce additional arguments or to assign different thematic roles to existing arguments of the verb. These are the causative suffix *-f-*, the applicative marker *-iɪ-/-eɪ-*, the stative (or potential) marker *-ik-*, the reciprocal marker *-an-*, and the passive marker *-oow-*.

The structure of the verb in Chimiini is thus largely identical to that of other coastal Bantu languages. However, differences are encountered in the subject and object marking strategies employed. In some verbal tenses, third person singular and plural are marked by a penultimate pitch accent, while first and second persons singular and plural are marked by a pitch accent on the last syllable, as demonstrated for the progressive and the perfect in example (52) below.

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(52a) (mi) na-χ-fakatá
PRON_{1SG} PROG-INF-run_away_{1/2SG}
'I am running away.'

(52b) na-χ-fakáta
PROG-INF-run_away_{3SG}
'He is running away.'

(52c) n-fak-eeté
SP_{2PL}-run_away-PRF_{1/2PL}
'You (PL) ran away.'

(52d) wa-fak-éete
SP₂-run_away-PRF_{3PL}
'They ran away.'

In other tenses, verbs may be marked only for agreement with a plural subject, while in yet other tenses verbs are never marked for subject agreement. At the same time objects are usually either zero marked or double marked.

(53a) mi n-rud-i:ie
PRON_{1SG} SP_{1SG}-return-PRF
'I returned.'

(53b) mi m-rud-ile
PRON_{1SG} OP₁-return-APPL.PRF
'I sent him home.'

As pointed out by Nurse (1982), the dropping of subject marking on verbs is also found in northern Swahili dialects; it is also known to occur in traditional Swahili writing. The same partial marking of person by pitch accent and the absence of subject marking on verbs for 1/2/3 SG is attested in the Eastern Cushitic language Tunni (see Tosco 1997).

With the optative, Chimiini makes a difference between a first person inclusive, e.g. *t̃ei-law-eeeni* 'let us (all) go!', and exclusive, e.g. *t̃ei-llaw-e* 'let us go! (directed towards addressee and speaker, but not other participants)'. Clusivity occurs in Swahili but is also found in Standard Somali (cf. Saaed 1999), which is based on northern varieties.

The most frequently occurring causative suffix is *-f-* (with the allomorphs *-z-* after *ɹ* and *l*, and occasionally *-s-*).

- (54) ku-bar-f-a ‘to teach’ < ku-kubarat-a ‘to learn’
 ku-100-z-a ‘to arrange a marriage’ < ku-100.1-a ‘to marry’
 ku-11-s-a ‘to make s.o. pay back sth.’ < ku-11-p-a ‘to pay back’

The applicative marker *-i1-/-e1-* introduces different semantic roles depending on the semantics and valency of the verb, as well as the context. With intransitive verbs, for example, the applicative introduces an adversative meaning.

- (55) jeexi koð-el-eele Nuuru
 sheekhi speak-APPL-PRF Nuuru
 ‘Sheekhi spoke badly about Nuuru.’

With transitive verbs, the applicative expresses a benefactive with animate objects, and an instrumental with non-animate objects.

- (56) Aafa na-m-pik-11a m-aana kudza
 Asha PROG-OP1-cook-APPL 1-child 9.food
 ‘Asha is cooking food for the child.’
- (57) tei-ssu te-aa=mi hu-tiind-11-o naama [...]
 7-knife 7-CON=PRON1SG HAB-cut-APPL-REL 9.meat
 ‘the knife, with which I cut the meat [...]

Where the transitivity of a light verb is already expressed by a following bare noun, the applicative has to be used to introduce additional arguments. Here the thematic roles again depend on the verbal semantics.

- (58) na-m-big-11a Baazi n-kele
 PROG-OP1-beat-APPL Baazi 10-shout
 ‘I am shouting at Baazi.’
- (59) ni-m-big-il-iile Asma telefonu
 SP1SG-OP1-hit-APPL-PRF Asma telephone
 ‘I called Asma (by phone).’
- (60) Ifa ta-m-big-11a Ali faati=j-e paasi
 Isha FUT-OP1-hit-APPL Ali 9.shirt=9-POSS3SG iron
 ‘Isha will iron the shirt for Ali.’

The applicative also expresses an “isolative” meaning, which usually – although not always – requires a reflexive object marking prefix *i-*.

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(61) daad-a karant-il-ile mahala kure
 grandmother-POSS_{1SG} sit-APPL-PRF 9.place far
 ‘My grandmother sat by herself in a place far away.’

(62) i-laal-il-e
 REFL-sleep-APPL-OPT
 ‘Go to sleep by yourself.’

The stative (or potential) marker reduces the valency of the verb and changes the object of the corresponding transitive construction into a subject.

(63) Haad̂zi .iis-i.e deeni
 Haaji pay_back-PRF 9.debt
 ‘Haaji paid back the debt.’

(64) deeni iji hu.iip-ika
 9.debt 9.DEM_{PROX} HAB-pay_back-STAT
 ‘This debt can be paid back.’

In constructions such as example (64) above, the stative is used to express a potential action. Alternatively, it may mark an unaccusative verb.

(65) m-naango u-fung-uf-i.e
 3-door SP₃-open-STAT-PRF
 ‘The door opened.’

The reciprocal *-an-* (with allomorphs *-any-*, *-maan-*) indicates actions conducted towards each other:

(66) i-t̂ei-ma.iiza killa muu-ntu k-eng-oowa
 SP_{IMPERS}-NARR-finish every 1-person INF-go-PASS
 kaa=wo ahli ku-zijarat-ana [...]
 to=PRON_{3PL} relatives INF-visit-RECP
 ‘Once everyone is done visiting each other’s relatives [...]
 (lit.: Once it has finished that every person has gone to theirs to visit relatives)’

The reciprocal may also indicate collaborative actions. Note also the reduplication of the Italian borrowing *gruppo* to indicate a partitive in (67).

- (67) hú-wa wa-na-ku-raǰ-mána gruppó
 HAB-be(come) SP₂-PROG-INF-follow-RECP group
 ‘They are going around together (lit. following one another) in groups.’

Finally, the passive marker *-oow-* occurs, and can also be combined with some of these derivational markers, such as the causative and the applicative:

- (68) ku-bar-ǰ-iíiza
 INF-learn-CAUS-APPL
 ‘to teach using something’
- (69) ku-bar-ǰ-iíiz-oowa
 INF-learn-CAUS-APPL-PASS
 ‘to be taught using something’

The most commonly occurring combinations are with the causative.

As is common in languages with secundative alignment, the primary object (expressing the beneficiary) precedes the secondary object in Chimiini. Cross-reference (or object) marking on the verb by way of an object prefix is co-indexed with the primary object, which may be realized as an enclitic pronoun in such cases.

- (70) mí ǰu-p-eíee=wé m-pííia
 PRON_{1SG} OP_{2SG}-give-PRF=PRON_{2SG} 3-ball
 ‘I have given you the ball.’

Henderson (2014: 300) discusses a special type of three-place verb construction (‘affecting predicates’) in Chimiini; these have no applicative marker and involve inalienable possession whereby the possessor is expressed as a primary object.

- (71) Omari | Ø-m-vunz-ile m-aana | kuulu
 Omar SP₁-OP₁-break-PRF 1-child 9.leg
 ‘Omar broke the child’s leg.’

As further argued by Henderson (2014: 300), no object agreement occurs on the verb if a possessor enclitic occurs (see the discussion on inverted possessive constructions in Section 3.2 above).

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- (72) Omari | Ø-(*m)-vunz-ile m-aana | kuulu=y-e
 Omar SP₁-OP₁-break-PRF 1-child 9.leg=9-POSS_{3SG}
 ‘Omar broke the child’s leg.’

Henderson (2014) further discusses conditions on “raising to subject” for the possessor, as in (73).

- (73) m-aana | Ø-vund-ij-ije kuu.ru
 1-child SP₁-break-STAT-PRF 9.leg
 ‘(As for) the child, the leg has broken.’

There are six basic tense/aspect markings in Chimiini, five of which are marked by means of a prefix, i.e. future *ta-*, progressive *na-*, habitual *hu-* (with an allomorph *h-* before verb bases featuring a vocalic onset and Ø on stems featuring *h* as onset), narrative *t̃i-* (with the allomorph *t̃e-* on stems featuring a vocalic onset and *f-* before voiceless obstruents), and irrealis *ka-*.

The perfect is marked by the suffix *-V:ie ~ -V:ze ~ -eete*. For example, a number of verbs ending in *-ata* form their perfect through imbrication, resulting in a fused morpheme *-eete*. With the exception of *χ-paṭa* ‘to find’, which has a Swahili cognate *-pata*, the distribution of *-ata/-eete* seems to be lexically determined, since all verbs featuring those suffixes have been borrowed either directly from Somali (and related languages) or from Arabic via Somali, e.g. *χ-sawarata* ‘to bear, endure with patience’, which was borrowed from Arabic *ṣabara* but probably via Somali *sabar*. However, this suffix can fuse with the verbal root, i.e. imbrication may occur, and is dropped where the causative is derived from such verbs. Like in most other Bantu languages, the perfect marker thus takes on various forms which are only predictable from a phonological point of view to a limited extent (with the exception of perfect forms ending in *-ata*; see Kisseberth & Abasheikh 1974).

There are two mood distinctions, which are marked by suffixes on the verb, namely the indicative (*-a*), and the imperative/optative (*-e*, plural *-eeni*).

- (74) na-m-siifa Baazi
 PROG-OP₁-praise Baazi
 ‘I’m praising Baazi.’

- (75) m-sif-eeni Baazi
 OP₁-praise-IMP.PL Baazi
 ‘(May) you (PL) praise Baazi!’

With the exception of verbs in passive or negative clauses, this final vowel is *-o* in relative clauses:

- (76) ni Baana m-sif-ii-o Baazi
 COP Baana OP₁-praise-PRF-REL Baazi
 ‘It is Baana, who praised Baazi.’

5. Some syntactic features

From a formal point of view, Chimiini makes a distinction between verbal and non-verbal predications. The latter again can be subdivided into existential equations, spatial equations, associative equations, and focused equations. For existential equations Chimiini uses the invariable copula *ni* in the affirmative and *siwo* in negative constructions.

- (77) míini | ni múu-ji | w-a ma-féexi [...]
 Brava | COP 3-city | 3-CON 6-Sheykh
 ‘Brava is the town of Sheykh [...]’

Spatial equations are expressed using the locative copulas *-ko* ‘at’ or *-mo* ‘inside’ in combination with subject markers, as demonstrated in examples (25) and (26) above. In addition, spatial equations are sometimes metaphorically extended. In example (78), the meaning of a copula construction using *-ko* is extended to express basic existence.

- (78) móod̂za ú-ko
 god SP₁-COP.LOC₁₇
 ‘God exists (is for real/is eternal).’

In example (79), a copula expression using *-mo* is metaphorically extended to express a state (of mind):

- (79) [...] nii-mó karka fikíri
 SP_{1SG}-COP.LOC₁₈ inside 9/10.thought
 ‘[...] I am in thought(s).’

Affirmative associative constructions are formed using the proclitic *mba=* when the possessed item is animate and *nda=* when the possessee is inanimate.

- (80) m-ba úju mba=Báana
 9-dog 1.DEM_{PROX} ASSOC.COP=Baana
 ‘This dog (is/belongs to) Baana.’

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- (81) n-úumba íji nda=m-aalímu
 9-house 9.DEM_{PROX} ASSOC.COP=1-teacher
 ‘This house belongs to the teacher.’

Focused equations, which are usually contrastive and which can only occur in affirmative constructions, are expressed by means of the focus copula *ndi* followed either by an encliticized personal pronoun or object pronoun.

- (82) [...] ndi=jé manaani
 FOC.COP=1.SAD kind_one
 ‘[...] he (God) is the kind one.’

These non-verbal predications can only be used for timeless or general statements. In other cases, *ku-wa* ‘to be(come)’ must be combined with the class 17 copula *-ko* to express existential equation, and with class 18 *-mo* to express a locative meaning:

- (83) wá-ii-ko taad̂zíri
 be(come)-PST-LOC₁₇ rich_person
 ‘(S)he was a rich person.’

- (84) m-bá-ii-mo miskítíi-ni
 SP_{1SG}-be(come)-PST-LOC₁₈ 3.mosque-LOC
 ‘I was in the mosque.’

The prefix *-ii-* in (84) is cognate with the Swahili past tense marker *li-* and forms a complex verb form with the verb ‘be’ (*-ba*, the allomorph of *-wa*) in this example. The suffix *-V:ae*, which is employed to mark perfect with all other verbs, has developed into an (aspectual) inchoative marker when combined with *-wa* (where it always occurs in imbricated form), expressing a continuation of past events, often with implications for the present.

- (85) w-éere taad̂zíri
 be(come)-PRF_{3SG} rich_person
 ‘(S)he became a rich person.’

Whereas copulas in spatial, associative, and focused constructions can only be employed in affirmative utterances, existential and locative equations are possible also in negative forms, namely by means of the negative copula *siwo*, which is used for timeless or general negative existential equations.

- (86) mu-tj síwo m-néne
 3-tree NEG.COP 3-big
 ‘The tree is not big.’

However, in any other tense, existential and locative (or spatial) equations are merged in negative forms, i.e. again syncretism occurs. Class 17 *-ko* or class 18 *-mo* must be combined with the verbal base *-wa* ‘to be(come)’. An example:

- (87) [...] ijo Birúuni na Mpáaji nṭa-wáa-mo
 9.DEM_{PROX} Biruuni and/with Mpaayi NEG-be-LOC₁₈
 ‘[...] in this, Biruuni and Mpaayi are not included.’

The structure of complex clauses is not further discussed here for reasons of space, but actual examples can be found in the present contribution. Examples of relative clauses occur in (41), (42), (49), (50), (57), (88), and (90), whereas complementation occurs in (66) and (92).

A frequently used complex sentence structure in Chimiini, which appears to be absent in Swahili dialects, is a kind of verbal framing construction whereby the predicate is repeated in a relative form after the object.

- (88) [...] wa-gábra | h-unna ṭeái ka hálwa | h-unn-ó | [...]
 2-Gabra | HAB-drink 7.tea PREP halwa | HAB-drink-REL
 ‘[...] the Gabra drink tea with halwa [...]!’

This clause-chaining strategy expresses continuity of a process or action. Such constructions have also been reported for Kisangani Swahili (Nico Nassenstein, p.c., April 2018). They have a high frequency in Chimiini and are a prominent marker of textual genres such as action description, where they are used by default when describing sequences of actions.

Where co-ordination occurs, the tense in which a co-ordinate verbal action is situated and the (non-)identity of subjects affect the presence or absence and the type of coordinator, as well as the tense employed for the co-ordinated phrase. In example (89), a zero coordinator is employed since the co-ordinated action is sequential, when the same subject is maintained, and the verbal actions are situated in the past.

- (89) [en-zééɪe numbáa=ni] [∅] [li-zííɪe]
 [go-PRF_{3SG} 9.house=LOC] [cry-PRF_{3SG}]
 ‘He went home and cried.’

The habitual is also used as a kind of narrative tense in the past, as in (90).

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- (90) w-áa=je hu-m-bíg-o mara móoji | ʃ-fakáta
 1-CON=PRON_{3SG} HAB-OP₁-hit-REL immediately | NARR-run_away
 ‘(The one) whom he hit immediately ran away.’

Note that, in the example above, the head noun of the connective is absent; instead, the connective is used together with a cliticized personal pronoun as object relative pronoun, whereas the predicate of the topicalized verbal phrase is marked for habitual, and situated in the (narrative) past as expressed by the verb of the main clause.

In conditional sentences, *t̃ei-* is used as a hypothetical form, where the protasis is judged possible.

- (91) áma | ʃ-t̃ei-kooð-é.ɪa | ʔaráfu j-a múu-n̄t̃i w-a íidi |
 or | SP_{1PL}-SIT-speak-APPL | about 9-CON 3-day 3-CON Eid |
 karka ntí j-a Míini | áada j-a wáa-n̄t̃u
 in(side) 9.country 9-CON Brava | 9.custom 9-CON 2-person
 w-a Míini [...]
 2-CON Brava
 ‘And if we were to speak of the day of Eid in the country of Brava (and) the custom(s) of the people of Brava, [...]’.

When the protasis is judged impossible, the tense marker *ka-* occurs, as in the following example, where the person whom the speaker wants to tell what is going on in this world is already deceased.

- (92) [...] náani ta-ku-f-ó ka-m-fungul-ilá máa-mbo
 who FUT-INF-die-REL IRR-OP₁-open-APPL 6-events
 j-a dunijáa=ni
 6-CON 9.world=LOC
 ‘[...] who will die, (so) that I could tell him (lit. open) (of) the events of the world.’

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Abbreviations

-	affix boundary	M	masculine
=	clitic boundary	NARR	narrative
1	noun class 1 agreement	NC	noun class
1SG	first person singular (etc.)	NEG	negative
ABS	absolutive	OP	object prefix
ANA	anaphoric	PASS	passive
APPL	applicative	POSS	possessive
ASSOC.COP	associative copula	PREP	preposition
CAUS	causative	PRF	perfect
CON	connective	PROG	progressive
COP	copula	PRON	pronoun
DEM	demonstrative	PROX	proximal
DET	determiner	RECP	reciprocal
DIST	distal	REFL	reflexive
FOC	focus	REL	relative
FUT	future	SAD	shortened anaphoric demonstrative
IRR	irrealis	SIT	situative
LOC	locative	SP	subject prefix

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