

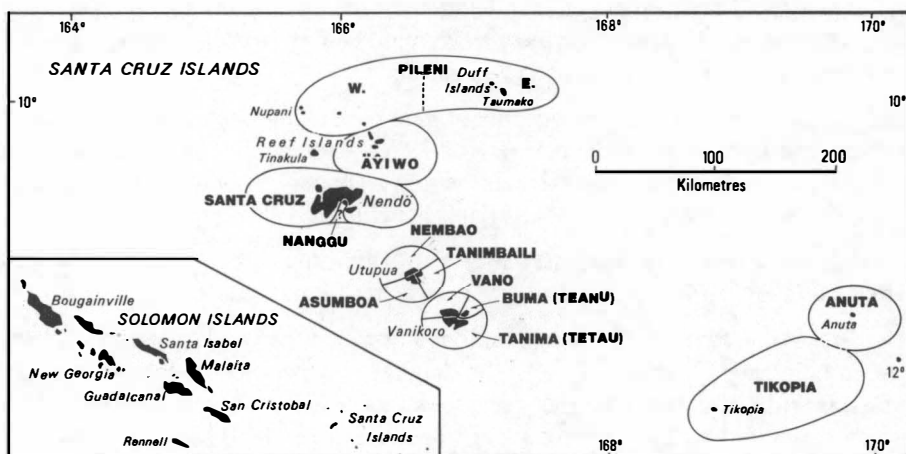
CHANGE OF LANGUAGE STRUCTURE AND TYPOLOGY IN A PACIFIC LANGUAGE AS A RESULT OF CULTURE CHANGE

S.A. WURM

1. INTRODUCTION

In many languages of the world, more or less far-reaching changes in language structure have taken place over periods of time, sometimes involving even changes in typology. It appears that changes in structure may happen spontaneously, without necessarily being a consequence of strong cultural and/or linguistic influence from outside. Changes in typology are, on the other hand, usually linked with, and can be regarded as a result of, external influences.

In this paper I describe the particularly interesting case of Äyiwo, a Papuan language of the Reef Islands, Solomon Islands. By way of introduction, however, I would like to make some general remarks about structural and typological changes in a variety of other languages.



LANGUAGES OF THE SANTA CRUZ ARCHIPELAGO, SOLOMON ISLANDS

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2. STRUCTURAL AND TYPOLOGICAL CHANGES IN INDO-EUROPEAN LANGUAGES

One case of structural change in Indo-European languages has for instance been the gradual erosion, and even disappearance of the original overt three-gender system with nouns in several Germanic and Iranian languages, in Albanian and in all present-day Romance languages.

In the major contemporary metropolitan Scandinavian languages, that is, Danish, East Norwegian (Bokmål) and Swedish, but not in Icelandic, Faroese and Nynorsk (West Norwegian), the original masculine-feminine-neuter three-gender system of Old Norse has given way to a two-gender system, which in the case of East Norwegian is the result of Danish influence, whereas in Danish itself and in Swedish it seems to have been a more or less spontaneous development. In several dialects of Norwegian for instance, the old three-gender system has been preserved, and in East Norwegian it has now been artificially re-introduced through language planning and the school system – a process which has gone on step by step for over two decades and is still continuing.

In Western Germanic languages, the old three-gender system with nouns has, in the metropolitan languages, been reduced to a two-gender system in Dutch, and has completely disappeared in Afrikaans and English. In the former, indirect influence from local South African languages through the employment of numerous local people in households and other places whose Afrikaans was, especially in the old days, severely limited, may have played a part in this. At the same time, it may have to be remembered that the relevant African languages possess either a three-gender system (in Nama and the other languages spoken by the Hottentots) or a multiple-class noun classification system which is present in all Bantu languages. For speakers of such languages, the Dutch two-gender system should therefore not be something completely new as it would be for speakers of languages with no gender or noun-class distinctions, such as Hungarian.

In Albanian the original overt three-gender system with nouns has tended to be reduced to a two-gender system in Albanian dialects (Byron 1976). However, it has been maintained in the unified standard written language, though only two genders, masculine and feminine, are distinguished with adjectives and pronouns (Hetzer & Finger 1989).

The modern Romance languages all have an overtly indicated two-gender system with nouns which has changed from the three-gender system of Latin.

It is significant that even in the cases mentioned in which the gender system in nouns has disappeared, as in English and Afrikaans, the languages concerned have preserved gender distinctions in third person singular pronouns. They are therefore still languages typologically characterised by the presence of some sort of gender distinction. All the cases mentioned constitute therefore a change in the nature of one of the structural features of the given languages, but not a change in typology.

The situation is however different with some Iranian languages. Old Persian had an overtly indicated three-gender system with nouns, though the neuter gender played a subordinate role and was separated from the masculine gender only in a few inflected forms. The contemporary Iranian languages have mostly preserved an overtly indicated two-gender system in nouns. However, some of them, such as Modern Persian, have lost the gender-system in nouns entirely, and it has also disappeared from the pronoun system. Modern Persian has therefore changed typologically from a language type characterised by the

presence of gender distinction to one characterised typologically by the lack of gender distinction. The use of a demonstrative pronoun for third person singular in many parts of the Persian-speaking area when referring to animals and lifeless objects is a secondary development, and not related to the Old Persian gender distinction – it is a human versus non-human class distinction and typologically different from a gender distinction in nouns. The disappearance of gender distinction in Modern Persian may perhaps in part be the result of influence by other, Turkic languages spoken in the area.

What has been said so far has served to indicate that changes in the structure of well-known European languages and languages spoken near the European orbit do occur in the course of time, be it spontaneously or as a result of influence from other languages. In some instances, such changes go beyond being changes in the structure of a language, and affect its linguistic typology.

3. CHANGES IN LANGUAGES RESULTING FROM CHANGES IN THE CULTURE OF THE SPEAKERS

3.1 TURKISH

In the cases mentioned so far, the question of changes in language structure and typology being the result of a change in the culture of the speakers of the languages involved has not been raised. While this factor may well have played some role in producing these changes, for instance in the case of English, Afrikaans, the Romance languages, and Modern Persian, it may not have been very important, except perhaps in the case of Afrikaans, and to some extent in those of English and Modern Persian. However, there are many instances of such changes observable in other languages in which changes in the culture of the speakers have played a significant part in producing structural and typological changes in their languages (Wurm 1987a). A case in point is a marked tendency of the Turkish spoken by members of the young generation, especially in large cities in Turkey such as Istanbul and Izmir, to show a predilection for the expression of several successive actions through a number of successive coordinate verbs linked by conjunctions. This is radically different from the traditional Turkish way of expression in which the verb indicating the last of several successive actions occupies a key position, with the other verbs subordinate to it, and no conjunctions being used. The reason for this can be seen in the fact that a very large number of Turks went to Western Europe, especially Germany, as migrant workers. Many of these stayed there for decades and their children having been born and having grown up there, became culturally very strongly Westernised and acquired a complete command of German, the language of the country of their residence. In German, several successive actions are expressed by successive coordinate verbs, with conjunctions linking them. This manner of expression is typologically different from that characteristic of traditional Turkish, but has been increasingly adopted by the young Westernised Turks in Germany. Even their parents who did not acquire a good command of German were exposed, albeit in a rudimentary form, to the conceptual thinking of German speakers as expressed in the German language, with some effects upon the typology of the Turkish spoken by them. This exposure took place through the widespread use of a pidginised version of German serving as a means of inter-communication between Turks and German speakers, and also between Turks and other migrant workers whose largely Indo-European (Slavic, Romance and Greek) languages are typologically similar to German. That Pidgin German reflects the typology of German in the manner in which successive actions are expressed. Many thousands of Turks

have returned to Turkey in recent years, especially to the large cities, bringing back with them changed types of linguistic expression. These returned Turks are often highly respected and influential, having money and bringing back with them new knowledge and experiences. Because of this, local Turks, in particular members of the young generation, tend to admire and imitate their manner of speaking Turkish, which contributes to the spread of the typologically non-Turkish features mentioned above.

3.2 MEDNYJ (COPPER) ISLAND ALEUTIAN

Another striking example of cultural change having a profound influence upon the structure and typology of a language is that of the Aleutian dialect of Mednyj (Copper) Island in the Bering Strait (Vakhtin & Golovko 1987). These Aleutians had come under very strong Russian cultural influence during the Russian domination of the Bering Strait and Alaskan areas, and their traditional culture largely disappeared as a result. This had a profound influence upon their highly complex, entirely suffixing, language which is a member of the Eskimo-Aleutian language family. One consequence of this influence was the adoption of the comparatively simple Russian person and number marking systems, together with the Russian suffixes themselves, for the Aleutian verbs in place of the highly complex indigenous systems and forms, as well as the Russian formal and systemic indication of the present and past tenses. Of particular interest is the fact that for the indication of the future tense, the Russian auxiliary verb used for the marking of it in verbs in Russian was adopted in an abbreviated form as a prefix to the Aleutian verbs which is completely at variance with the totally suffixing nature of the language. Similarly, traditional Aleutian has no infinitive form of the verb, but the Russian suffix *-ty* which marks the infinitive in most Russian verbs, has been adopted in Mednyj Island Aleutian to produce a verb form in it which syntactically functions like the infinitive in Russian – two typological changes from traditional Aleutian as a result of cultural change and influence from a metropolitan language.

4. STRUCTURAL AND TYPOLOGICAL CHANGES IN LANGUAGES OF THE SOUTH-WESTERN PACIFIC

4.1 INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Particularly striking instances of changes in languages as a result of culture change are met with in the south-western Pacific region, especially in the highly complex Papuan languages of the New Guinea area. Their often very elaborate grammatical structures, in which individual elements have special functions and express concepts which are based on features and characteristics of the indigenous cultures of the speakers of such languages, are especially vulnerable to culture change. With the change, breakdown and disappearance of the traditional cultures, usually resulting from clashes with a metropolitan culture, some of the complex features of such languages which are rooted in the traditional cultures of their speakers, lose their significance to them and cease to have meaningful functions against their often radically changed cultural background. Therefore, such features fall into disuse and eventually disappear entirely from the languages.

4.2 AN AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL EXAMPLE

Similar developments to those that have been briefly outlined above have been encountered in Australian Aboriginal languages. So for instance, the Kamilaroi (Gamilaraay) language which was formerly widespread in northern New South Wales, had a complicated tense system in the verbs which, in addition to other features, indicated a number of points of time during the day related to the rising and setting sun. This special tense system in the verb had important cultural significance for the Kamilaroi, because it was connected with the daily cycle of behaviour of animals which the Kamilaroi hunted for food. The Kamilaroi culture disintegrated rapidly following European contact and the language headed towards extinction. The last fluent speakers of Kamilaroi were interviewed and recorded over thirty years ago, largely by the present writer, and it was found that much of this special tense system which had been described by interested persons almost a century ago, had disappeared from the language. These last speakers of the language were very old men who had no longer been hunting animals for many years, and the elaborate tense distinctions relating to animal behaviour were no longer culturally significant for them. They had thus ceased to be part of their daily language and had been forgotten.

4.3 STRUCTURAL AND TYPOLOGICAL CHANGES IN PAPUAN LANGUAGES AS A RESULT OF CULTURAL CHANGE

As has been briefly mentioned in section 4.1 phenomena of changes in the structure and typology of languages as a result of cultural change are particularly striking in Papuan languages of the New Guinea area and adjacent regions. An important difference between cases observed there, and the Australian Aboriginal example described above in section 4.2 is the fact that Papuan languages thus affected are not heading for impending extinction. Instead they continue as viable languages, though in altered forms which structurally and typologically tend to reflect features of the, usually metropolitan, language associated with the intrusive culture which has, in part and usually only in a rudimentary form, been adopted by the speakers of Papuan languages affected. In this respect the situation of such Papuan languages bears some similarity to that surrounding changed forms of Turkish, and the case of Mednyj Island Aleutian, as described in sections 3.1 and 3.2. However, a distinguishing feature of the Papuan situation is that speakers of changed Papuan languages are quite often not familiar with the metropolitan language involved, which is usually English. However, it seems that various forms of Pidgin English in the areas concerned such as Tok Pisin in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands Pijin in the Solomon Islands, play a vital role in the developments mentioned. Virtually all members of the young generations of Papuan speakers in areas pertinent to the present discussion are well acquainted with the relevant forms of Pidgin English. The south-western Pacific forms of Pidgin English reflect in their structures largely indigenous thinking and categorisation of the surrounding world, but only in a rudimentary and very much reduced form. For instance, overtly indicated noun class systems which play an important part in many Papuan languages, are not indicated in them – they are also lacking in English. Temporal systems appear only in rudimentary forms, though the aspect systems tend to be quite complicated.

It seems that the observed changes in the structures and typologies of Papuan languages whose speakers have experienced changes in their cultures as a result of clashes with an intrusive, usually metropolitan, culture, are the result of the penetration of the thinking systems and world view of an alien culture. The carrier of this process is a special linguistic

vehicle, notably, one or the other form of Pidgin English which occupies a transitional position between the two conceptual worlds. As has been said above, the south-western Pacific forms of Pidgin English largely reflect indigenous rather than English thinking and conceptual categorisations, but in some other respects, reflect English and metropolitan thinking and conceptual categorisations. Also, they are simplified in their grammatical structures and tend to indicate categories and concepts in a general, often rather vague, manner, which contrasts markedly with the usually very precise indication of them in indigenous languages. It may therefore be possible to say that in the south-western Pacific area there is an influence, in particular on Papuan languages, through forms of Pidgin English which serve to transmit an alien conceptual system into the indigenous cultural and conceptual system. At the same time these forms of Pidgin English constitute a simplified means of expression which creates pressure directed at the reduction of the grammatical complexity of the Papuan languages. Their speakers tend to yield to such cultural and linguistic pressure. In reducing the complexity of their languages they tend to select for continued use in them, categories which are present in the intrusive alien culture and conceptual system which they have adopted in part, in a rudimentary form. They tend to discard categories rooted in their traditional cultures and conceptual systems which they lose progressively as they adopt the intrusive one. This process is facilitated and accelerated by the fact that the members of the young generation of speakers of indigenous languages in the area are getting more and more thoroughly familiar with the intrusive metropolitan culture and conceptual system.

4.3.1 NOUN CLASSES AND CONCORDANCE SYSTEMS IN PAPUAN LANGUAGES

One feature present in a considerable number of Papuan languages which is especially prone to change, simplification and even disappearance as a result of changes in the culture of their speakers, is that of the presence and overt indication of, several to quite many, different genders and classes of nouns. Such gender and noun class systems are usually accompanied by concordance systems. If this is only in the noun phrase, adjuncts of quality and quantity such as attributive adjectives, possessive pronouns and numerals, and also demonstratives, show variations in form in agreement with the specific gender or class of the noun which they determine. If concordance systems go beyond the noun phrase, indication of the subject, and sometimes also the object, in the verb will differ according to the gender or class of the nouns to which the subject and object markers in the verb refer. Also the forms of the personal pronouns may, to a greater or lesser extent, vary according to the gender or class of the noun to which they refer, be it with third person pronouns only, or also with first (and second) person pronouns.

In quite a few of the Papuan languages which have gender or class systems with nouns, it has been established that the classification systems of nouns have their conceptual base in the traditional culture of their speakers and reflect the categorisation of the concrete and spiritual world surrounding them into a number of distinct units, such as trees, animals and plants of significance to the traditional indigenous life, objects connected with food production such as gardening, fishing, the utilisation of water, things and concepts connected with night when feared spirits and other supernatural beings are about, or matters connected with persons of either sex in babyhood, childhood, adolescence, or adult manhood and womanhood. The traditional cultures of speakers of such languages attributed certain features or values to such concepts and objects, with such features and values marked and distinguished in the

indigenous languages concerned by the assignment of separate genders and classes to the nouns denoting them. With changes in the traditional cultures of speakers of Papuan languages with gender and noun class systems through clashes with intrusive, as a rule metropolitan-based, cultures which eventually lead to the breakdown and disappearance of the indigenous cultures of the peoples concerned and the, mostly partial and rudimentary, adoption of the intrusive culture, the conceptual base for the assignment of certain classes to nouns tends to be forgotten, and the classes fall into disuse and eventually disappear from the language concerned. This results in a typological change of the language from languages with overt noun classification to languages without noun classification. So for instance, a catholic missionary (Kirschbaum 1926) observed the presence of a very complex noun class system comprising twelve classes with accompanying complicated concordance systems, in the Buna language in the northern part of the East Sepik Province of Papua New Guinea. Laycock (1975) carried out fieldwork in that area in 1970-71 and also looked at the Buna language but found that the noun class system reported by Kirschbaum half a century earlier had totally disappeared from the language of the people who had largely lost their traditional culture. Even old people who would have been alive at the time of Kirschbaum's work had no recollection of it any more. Similarly, Laycock (1973) found that the Papuan Murik language of the same area in Papua New Guinea, for which Schmidt (1953) had reported the presence of four noun classes, had completely lost this noun class system in the course of less than twenty years. Also, another Papuan language of the same general area, Mountain Arapesh, which still possessed an elaborate multi-noun-class system which had been reported by earlier observers, was found by Laycock (1975) to be in the process of undergoing a gradual breakdown of this elaborate noun class system.

4.3.2 COMPLEX STRUCTURAL FEATURES OF THE VERB IN PAPUAN LANGUAGES

Other elaborate structural features of Papuan languages which tend to be altered and simplified as a result of cultural changes experienced by their speakers, are complex tense systems of the verbs where changes comparable to those mentioned in section 4.2 in connection with the Australian Aboriginal language Kamilaroi may occur. Other features sometimes affected relate to the precise indication of the number (singular, dual, trial, general plural, collective etc.) of subject and object persons in a verb complex which may become only optionally, instead of obligatorily, indicated or reduced in complexity (Wurm 1986a). Similarly, in sentences in which several successive (or simultaneous) actions are referred to by a number of successive verbs, phenomena similar to those occurring in the traditional form of Turkish as referred to in section 3.1 are found, except that in Papuan languages, these systems tend to be very much more complicated and varied than in Turkish, with identity versus non-identity of the subjects of the successive verbs playing a major role in many languages in giving rise to a large number and complicated combinations of verb forms (Wurm 1987a).

4.3.3 UNUSUAL COUNTING SYSTEMS (IN PAPUAN LANGUAGES)

Another feature of a number of Papuan languages which is highly sensitive to culture change is the presence of unusual counting systems in which for instance parts of the bodies of the speakers are used as tallies, beginning with the fingers of one hand, proceeding to the wrist, elbow and shoulder on the same side, then across the tip of the nose to the other

shoulder and down the other arm to the fingers of the other hand, then continuing with the nipples of the breasts to the navel and eventually down the legs and to the toes. Up to thirty-seven consecutive counting points have been observed (Williams 1941). The numeral words in languages with such counting systems are derived from the parts of the bodies used as tallies. With the change, breakdown and loss of the traditional culture of the speakers of such languages through culture clash, these unusual counting systems tend to rapidly disappear and to be replaced by the abstract decimal counting systems of Pidgin English (i.e. Tok Pisin) or English along with the adoption of the Tok Pisin (or English) numeral words by the speakers (Wurm 1991a).

5. THE ÄËIWO LANGUAGE, REEF ISLANDS, SANTA CRUZ ARCHIPELAGO, SOLOMON ISLANDS

5.1 GENERAL REMARKS

One language in the south-western Pacific constitutes a particularly interesting case in connection with changes in it as a result of culture change. It is the ÄËiwo language of the Reef Islands in the Santa Cruz Archipelago situated at the eastern end of the Solomon Islands chain. With over 4,000 speakers it constitutes a sub-family-level isolate in the Reefs-Santa Cruz family of languages established by the present writer (Wurm 1969, 1982). This family includes, in addition to ÄËiwo, the Santa Cruz sub-family comprising two languages, Santa Cruzan (with about 3,500 speakers) consisting of the Northern Santa Cruzan and the South-Western Santa Cruzan (about 1,200 speakers) sub-languages, and the small Nanggu language (with about 250 speakers). The languages of this family were originally Papuan languages distantly related to other Papuan languages located in the Solomon Islands. They have taken over much from Austronesian languages, especially lexical elements and relatively simple and transparent structural elements. Thus they have taken over the system of indicating possession with nouns (Wurm 1972, 1981a), and some seemingly Austronesian affixes functioning in a framework of Papuan structural principles and systems, with their functions sometimes at variance with those of formally similar affixes in Oceanic Austronesian languages. The core features of the noun and verb structures of the languages of the family are very much at variance with what is usually found in an Oceanic Austronesian language, and very much in line with features encountered in Papuan languages, in addition to formal agreements with such features occurring in Papuan languages located in the Solomon Islands (Wurm 1978). A glance at the elaborate noun classification system in ÄËiwo (Wurm 1981b) and the intricate structure of the final verb in Northern Santa Cruzan (Wurm 1992) would confirm this, as would a look at the semantics and world view of ÄËiwo (Wurm 1985, 1987b).

5.2 ÄËIWO IN THE PROCESS OF CHANGING AS A RESULT OF CULTURE CHANGE

5.2.1 INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

A particularly interesting and important circumstance concerning ÄËiwo is the fact that it is a language in the process of undergoing structural, and in part also typological, changes, with this fairly rapid process of change observable over a considerable period of time.

5.2.2 THE ÄÿIWO NOUN CLASS SYSTEM AND OTHER STRUCTURAL FEATURES WHICH ARE AFFECTED BY CHANGES

5.2.2.1 GENERAL REMARKS AND DESCRIPTION

At the core of this process is the elaborate semantically-based system of noun classes, which is accompanied by concordance systems in the noun phrase (Wurm 1991b). In addition, Äÿiwo has a possessive class system and a construct possessive class system of which the latter in particular is affected by the process of change. The three systems are cross-cutting and bear little relationship to each other. Also involved in this process is a system of classifying verbs through the addition of prefixes to them which indicate modes of action, that is, that an action is carried out using one's hand, or a tool etc., or constitutes a single violent exertion of power, etc. Similarly, a special system in the language by which semantically related concepts are indicated by phonologically similar words (e.g. *temenge* 'skull of a living person', *tepeke* 'skull of a dead person, dead skull') is involved. Finally, Äÿiwo has polysynthetic features inasmuch as many of its lexical items are composed of small meaningful elements some of which do not occur in isolation, but carry specific meanings. A large portion of its vocabulary is descriptive in nature and many lexical items are verbal nouns consisting of a verb stem, with or without affixes, provided with one of the quite numerous class or gender prefixes found in Äÿiwo. This feature is also affected by the process of change.

5.2.2.2 THE ÄÿIWO NOUN CLASS AND CONCORDANCE SYSTEM IN DETAIL

Most classes in the semantically-based noun-class system indicates the nature, and in one instance the location, of the items denoted by nouns carrying the class prefixes. The class prefixes appear either with what seem to be original noun bases or, more commonly, verbs which function as verbal nouns when the class markers are prefixed to them. Many of the bases involved in this appear not only with one particular class prefix, but can be found with one or the other of a range of class prefixes, for example, *va* 'to be immature', *gi-va* 'male human baby' (*gi-* male human class), *sî-va* 'female human baby' (*sî-* female human class), *me-va* 'human babies (collective)' (*me-* human collective class), *pi-va* 'small adolescent' (*pi-* human adolescent class), *vä-va* 'small chicken' (*vä-* chicken class), *u-va* 'tiny banana' (*u-* banana class), *bo-va* 'tiny shark' (*bo-* shark class), *nwa-va* 'tiny fruit' (*nwa-* fruit class). So far, thirty-nine such classes have been encountered in Äÿiwo. They can be called variable noun classes.

Eight other noun classes have been met with in Äÿiwo which indicate the shape, appearance, and the specific nature of the relationship to other things, of the items referred to by the nouns appearing with such class prefixes. The bases to which they are added are mostly original noun bases. Apart from a few spectacular exceptions, most of the noun bases involved appear only with one particular class prefix of this type. However, sometimes variable noun class prefixes are themselves prefixed to a class prefix of this second type. The classes indicated by this second type of class prefix could perhaps be referred to as fixed noun classes. Examples: *nyigîle* '(its) tail' (*nyi-* pointed, protruding and standing out class), *no pû* 'gill (of a fish)' (*no-* indistinctly set off parts of a whole class), *neve* 'bone' (*ne-* sharply set off parts of a whole class), *nada* 'louse egg' (*na-* closely linked and co-occurring items class: louse eggs co-occur with lice).

Sixteen of the thirty-nine variable noun classes are accompanied by concordance phenomema of varying complexity within the noun phrase. When taking the use of the language by an average speaker aged over sixty years today as an example, it has been observed that with only five of these noun classes is there full agreement of attributive adjectives, numerals and possessives with the class of the noun which they determine (type a). With four further noun classes which denote persons (i.e. male, female, collective and adolescent), agreement is only with adjectives and emphasised possessives, but not fully with numerals which for all of these noun classes, take the person class prefix *pe-* (type b). With five further noun classes, agreement is only found with adjectives, and rarely with numerals, and possessives are provided with the general adjunct prefix *mi-* if possession is emphasised (type c). With two more noun classes, agreement is only found with numerals, with possessives carrying *mi-* as in type c, if possession is emphasised (type d). With the remaining twenty-three variable noun classes and the eight fixed noun classes, there is no concordance with the class of the noun in the noun phrase. Adjectives carry the general adjunct prefix *mi-*, numerals carry no prefix, and possession markers carry *mi-* if possession is emphasised (type e).

One example of each of the types (a)-(e) may be given here, after a short explanation of the Äÿiwo practical alphabet which was devised by two educated Äÿiwo speakers, Patrick Bwakolo and Martin Moÿiya, who both have had some linguistic training and experience. The alphabet was originally fully phonemic, but when used in teaching Äÿiwo pupils in school settings, it was found necessary to include the indication of some sub-phonemic features in it because of the complexity of factors conditioning whispered vowels and whispered *ÿ*, syllabicity and glides between vowels (Wurm 1986b).

Very briefly, the alphabet is as follows:

VOWELS		CONSONANTS			
i	u	p	t		k
e		b	d	dy	g
	o				kw
ä		bw			gw
a	ä		n	ny	ng
length: doubling aa					ngw
drop and rise of intensity		v	s		
in long vowels a.a				l	
whispered vowels î,û,ê		w	y		

GLIDES: labial w, palatal y, whispered palatal *ÿ*

Concordance type (a):

vä- chicken class, e.g. *opwa* 'to be white', *lakî* 'to be small', *eve* 'three', *nugo* 'my (food)': *väwopwa välakî väÿeve vänûgo* 'my three small white chickens'.

type (b):

gi- male human class, e.g. *va* 'to be immature, *nyigî* 'one', *nou* 'my (babies; general)': *giva gîlakî penyigî ginou* 'my one small male baby'. (Note: in affixes and bases containing *-i-*, *-u-*, this vowel changes to *-î-* or *-û-* in many instances when the affixes are added to words, or affixes to bases containing *-i-*, *-u-*).

type (c):

oli- cut nut class, e.g. *päko* 'good': *olîwopwa olîpäko nyigî minûgo* 'my one good cut nut (with white flesh)'.

type (d):

nwa- fruit class, e.g. *nwanyiga* 'pandanus fruit': *nwanyiga milakî nwanigî minou* 'my one small pandanus fruit'.

type (e):

be- basket class, e.g. *nûmuwamû* 'fish (generic: caught)': *benûmwamû milakî nyigî minûgo* 'my one small fish basket'.

5.2.2.3 EROSION OF THE CONCORDANCE SYSTEMS

With younger speakers, there is an increasing tendency, in direct proportion with age level, for fluctuating free variation between the types of concordance described and illustrated under (a)-(d) and what has been mentioned under (e). With teenagers (e) is used prevalently or almost exclusively. For instance, the examples given above can be observed in the following decaying forms:

- a) *vä-* : *väwopwa välakî eve vänugo; väwopwa välakî eve nugo; väwopwa milakî eve nugo.*
- b) *gi-* : *giva pelakî penyigî ginou; giva milakî nyigî ginou.*
- c) *olî-* : *olîwopwa mipäko nyigî (mi)to.*
- d) *nwa-* : *nwanyiga milakî nyigî (mi)nou.*

5.2.2.4 EROSION OF THE NOUN PREFIX SYSTEM

What has been outlined above in section 5.2.2.3, indicates the gradual erosion and disappearance of the concord systems in the noun phrase in Äyiwo. However, the system of class prefixes itself is subject to erosion because the bases for the classification itself are rooted in the traditional culture and with the changing and gradual loss of that culture the reasons for the use of the various class prefixes are no longer fully understood by the speakers. As a result dropping of some of the variable and also of fixed noun class prefixes (in the latter case, only if the same base can appear with several of them) has been observed with young speakers. For instance in present-day 'correct' Äyiwo, 'coconut' is *nenû*, and 'coconut palm' *nyānenû*, with the tree class prefix *nyā-*. Only in noun phrases can the *nyā-* be dropped. However, young speakers use *nenû* for both 'coconut' and 'coconut palm' in all cases. As another example, the noun base **-paa* 'sliver of wood or metal', which does not occur in 'correct' Äyiwo without noun class prefixes, appears in the following forms and meanings: with the pointed objects class prefix *nyi-* as *nyipaa* 'a chip' ('pointed sliver'), with

the indistinctly set off parts of a whole class prefix *no-* as *nopaa* 'pieces of bark beginning to peel off a tree trunk' (i.e. 'slivers indistinctly set off and still attached to the thing to which they belong and of which they form a part'), with the moving away into the distance class prefix *nyo-* as *nyopaa* 'type of arrow' (i.e. 'sliver-type object which moves away into the distance'), and with the foreign, in particular Polynesian, provenance class prefix *te-* as *tepaa* 'nail' (i.e. 'sliver of metal of foreign origin'). Young speakers tend to omit the prefixes and only use *paa* by itself in all four of the meanings mentioned.

5.2.2.5 EROSION OF OTHER COMPLEX STRUCTURAL FEATURES

Similar erosion is taking place in connection with the other structural features mentioned in section 5.2.2.1. With construct possessive class markers, young speakers tend to confuse them and to give preference to the most common marker amongst them, which is (y)ä. They also tend to mix up the verb prefixes which indicate modes of action and apply them incorrectly. Of the pairs of phonologically similar words which indicate semantically related concepts, young people tend to use only one member of each pair for both concepts, for example, *tepeke* for both 'skull of a living person' and 'skull of a dead person', *taula* for both *taula* 'to float (freely)' and 'to float (tied up, like a canoe)' which in the usage of old speakers is *taulaa*. Young speakers also have difficulty with understanding and correctly using some of the lexical items which are composed of small meaningful elements, some of which do not occur in isolation. They tend to truncate them or to replace some of them by loans from Solomon Islands Pijin.

What has been mentioned above in section 5.2 so far indicates that, as a result of the gradual loss of the traditional culture of the Äyiwo and its replacement by the different culture of the modern world, the Äyiwo language has been losing much of its structural complexity, with several of its structural features undergoing significant changes. At the same time a trend is in progress for the concord system of the language to become more and more simplified and to eventually disappear altogether, or at least to become non-functional and petrified. If this trend continues it will mean a change in the noun class system as well as in the typology of the language from one with an overt noun class system marked on the nouns by prefixes, to one without it, leaving only the possessive noun class system which shows only some, but not radical, signs of erosion and decay.

5.3 OLDER FORMS OF THE ÄYIWO LANGUAGE

5.3.1 INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

It has been mentioned elsewhere (Wurm 1992) that there were indications from pieces of information obtained from very old informants that until recently, the concordance system in the noun phrase in Äyiwo was more extensive and complex and included the third person singular pronouns. Further information of this kind obtained recently and assessed in the light of the earlier fragmentary pieces of information reveals the following.

5.3.2 CONCORDANCE SYSTEMS IN THE NOUN PHRASE

It seems that the concordance systems in the noun phrase were, a couple of generations ago, present in the language with more of the noun classes than today – fragmentary

information on this covers eight variable noun classes which today have no concordance systems accompanying them, bringing the total number of noun classes with concordance to twenty-four, out of thirty-nine variable plus eight fixed noun classes. Also, the concordance systems appear to have been fuller in all instances, that is, more of type (a) than (b), (c) and (d). It stands to reason to assume that more, if not all, the variable noun classes at least (and possibly also the fixed noun classes) were accompanied by concordance systems not so long ago – probably of the type (a), with full concordance in the noun phrase.

While this seems plausible, it is more striking that the class system appears to have extended to the third singular personal pronoun too.

5.3.3 THE NOUN CLASS SYSTEM AFFECTING THE THIRD PERSON SINGULAR PERSONAL PRONOUNS

The personal pronouns in Äÿiwo and the other languages of the Reefs-Santa Cruz Family are verbal nouns, based in Äÿiwo on the defective existential verb *i-~ÿi-* ‘to be, to exist (as)’ (Northern Santa Cruzan *ni-*) to which possessive suffixes largely borrowed from Oceanic Austronesian are added to form verbal nouns denoting ‘the fact of my, your, our, their existing’ = ‘I, you, we, they’. In Äÿiwo, this is not quite according to an Austronesian pattern, that is, ‘I’ is *ÿi-u*, with the *-u* a common first person singular possessive suffix in Oceanic Austronesian, and also used elsewhere in Äÿiwo, for instance for some terms of relationship, for example, *sîpeu* ‘my daughter’. (If possession is indicated by the direct adding of possessive suffixes to a noun – the mark of one of the very many possessive classes in Äÿiwo – the marker of the first person singular is often zero or sometimes another suffix.) The form *ÿiu* becomes the base form for possessive pronouns for other persons, for example, *ÿiu-mû* = ‘you(sg)’, *ÿiu-de* ‘we (four or more, inclusive)’. However, the third person singular personal pronoun is *ina* which appears to be the verb *i-~ÿi-* mentioned above, accompanied by the common Oceanic Austronesian third person singular possessive suffix *-na* which is very rare in Äÿiwo. Northern Santa Cruzan has a more regular system of personal pronouns, with the more usual of the two possessive suffix sets met with in the language added to the verb *ni-* mentioned above to form verbal nouns as in Äÿiwo, for example, *ni-ngä*, *ni-m*, *ni-du* ‘the fact of my, your (sg), our (three or more, inclusive) existing’ = ‘I, you (sg), we (three or more, inclusive)’. One of the many types of verbal nouns in Northern Santa Cruzan is regularly formed through the adding of possessive suffixes to verb stems, with the meaning of ‘the fact of my...ing’, for example, *ngü* ‘to eat’ (*ü* is a high front rounded vowel), *ngü-ngä* ‘the fact of my eating, my eating (+ object)’. In Äÿiwo, the same type of construction occurs, but less commonly than in Northern Santa Cruzan.

While the formation of personal pronouns in contemporary Äÿiwo is as described above, rare instances of a quite differently formed third person singular personal pronoun have been encountered, especially in magic invocations and songs, and texts with a mythological content. The forms *giwä* ‘he’, *sîwä* ‘she’ and *mewä* ‘they (human beings)’ were recorded. Once, *sîwä* was found in a text dealing with daily mundane matters, referring to a woman with considerable emphasis. In all these instances, the informants were very old men, aged about eighty years. These forms are clearly verbal nouns of a type very common in Äÿiwo, consisting of a class marker prefixed to a, mostly static, verb, and indicating concrete items and denoting ‘something that is X’, or ‘something that is in the state of being X’. For instance, the word *giva* ‘male human baby’ given in section 5.3.2.2. can be analysed as *gi-*

'something that is human and male' plus *va-* 'something that is immature', with *gi+va* as verbal noun meaning 'a male human that is in the state of being immature'. The static verb *-wa* appearing in the third person singular personal pronoun forms given above occurs as *a-wa-* and means 'to be at rest', 'to be unmoving', 'to be unchanging'. The form *giwa* could therefore be analysed as 'a male human that is unchangingly in that (male human) state' = 'he remains he' = 'he'. A very old informant volunteered the information that, in his boyhood his grandfather had told him that when he was an adolescent, old people had been using forms such as *giwa*, *sîwa* as third person singular pronouns regularly, especially when employing emphasis. There were many more of these forms then, and the informant was able to remember several of those which his grandfather had told him. They were, in addition to *giwa*, *sîwa* and *mewa*, the personal pronouns *piwa* for adolescents, *miwa* for animals or lifeless objects, or human beings referred to in general in the singular, *vâwa* for chickens, *bowa* for sharks and shark-like fish, *kawa* for animals and things that tended to change position and appearance quite suddenly, *nyâwa* for trees, and *nwawa* for fruits. The class prefixes in these forms are all used to form verbal nouns in contemporary Äyiwo – most of them have already been mentioned in section 5.3.2.2. The informant further indicated that the personal pronouns as used today were used by the old people in his grandfather's youth, including *ina* for third person singular, but that the latter was uncommon and regarded as 'bad and careless' language use by the old people. The period of time referred to by this informant is about the middle of the nineteenth century, at the beginning of major culture contact with missionaries and mission-influenced Melanesians from neighbouring areas in the area in question. It seems that the decaying process in Äyiwo had just started then and accelerated soon afterwards.

As already indicated in section 5.1 it appears that the Äyiwo language and its speakers had been under strong outside (i.e. Austronesian) influence thousands of years ago. Linguistic, prehistoric and other interdisciplinary evidence suggests that perhaps three or more thousand years ago speakers of a Papuan language ancestral or related to the present-day Yele language of Rossel Island (which itself seems to be related to Central and Western Solomons Papuan languages) arrived in the Central Solomons area, probably from further west. There is prehistoric evidence for an obsidian trade route from New Britain to the Santa Cruz area across the Solomon Islands and a possible connection between South Bougainville and the Reefs-Santa Cruz area for which there is also linguistic evidence. Movement along these routes has brought Papuan speakers of ancestral forms of the perhaps interrelated South Bougainville and Yele type languages to the Reefs-Santa Cruz area, along with speakers of Oceanic Austronesian of an archaic type – the latter may have antedated the former, or the former accompanied them in an inferior capacity, perhaps as slaves. Further prehistoric evidence indicates that movement along these routes may have ceased about two thousand years ago, for perhaps a millenium, resulting in a relative isolation of the Reefs-Santa Cruz area for a long time. This appears to have lead to disturbances in the suggested previous Austronesian-Papuan cultural relationship and to increasing linguistic interaction between speakers of the two language types, resulting in the linguistic forms observable today (see 5.1). For further details see Wurm (1978:988-990) and the literature quoted there.

5.3.4 THE NOUN CLASS SYSTEM AFFECTING THE SUBJECT MARKING IN VERBS

5.3.4.1 INTRANSITIVE VERBS

The old informant mentioned above volunteered another startling piece of information about the Äÿiwo language of the past period referred to in section 5.3.3, remembering his grandfather's words. In Äÿiwo, the indication of the subject of intransitive verbs is by prefixes preceding aspect prefixes to the verb stem. These are: *i-* for first person singular, *mi-* for second person singular, again *i-* for third person singular, *de-* for first person plural (more than three, inclusive), etc. The informant said that in the past period referred to the third person singular prefix *i-* was used but regarded by the old people as 'bad' usage. More commonly, class markers were used for the third person singular object. With the verb *meÿi* 'to sleep', for which the third person singular form of the continuing aspect is, in contemporary Äÿiwo, *i-kî-meÿi* irrespective of the noun class of the subject, the informant recalled, from the forms mentioned to him by his grandfather, the forms *gi-kî-meÿi* for an adult male human subject, *sî-kî-meÿi* for an adult female human subject, *pi-kî-meÿi* for an adolescent human subject, *vä-kî-meÿi* for a chicken, *bo-kî-meÿi* for a shark and other shark-like fish, *ka-kî-meÿi* for animals and things tending to change position and appearance quite suddenly, *pe-kî-meÿi* for a person irrespective of sex, and *de-kî-meÿi* for an animal. From the reported reaction of the old people to the use of *i-* for the third person singular subject, it appears that the decay in the class systems in the language began, like that affecting third person singular pronouns described above, in the middle of the nineteenth century. However, from what has been outlined herein, it also seems that in the original form of the language, the noun class system and its accompanying concordance were much more elaborate than even with very old speakers today, and that the latter extended beyond the noun phrase to also affect the third person singular personal pronouns and the third person singular subject markers of intransitive verbs.

5.3.4.2 TRANSITIVE VERBS

With Äÿiwo transitive verbs subject suffixes are employed which differ in several cases from the subject prefixes appearing with intransitive verbs. The question arises whether class markers played a role in the past with the marking of the subject of transitive verbs. The old informant mentioned above had only a vague recollection of his grandfather talking about something in this connection. It may seem unlikely that class markers entered into the suffixal indication of the subject of transitive verbs because the class markers are always prefixal in nature. However, the old informant thought that he remembered vaguely his father mentioning the forms *giÿivägûlogumû* and *sîÿivägûlogumû* for 'he hit you (sg)' and 'she hit you (sg)'. In contemporary Äÿiwo, 'he (or she) hit you (sg)' is *i-vä-gûlo-gu-mû*, which can be analysed as follows: *i-* perfect aspect marker, *vä-* action carried out with one's hand, *gûlo* 'to hit', *-gu* third person singular subject marker appearing only if followed by a non-third person object marker, *-mû* second person singular object marker. In the old forms given above, the male human class marker *gi-* and the human female class marker *sî-* are prefixed before the aspect marker *i-* (with the *-ÿ-* connecting glide required by Äÿiwo morphophonemics to be interposed) to denote the class of the subject. It seems likely that other classes of this subject were also indicated by class prefixes in a similar manner, especially with human and animal subjects, producing forms such as **piÿivägûlogumû* for an adolescent human subject, **väÿivägûlogumû* for a chicken as subject, **boÿivägûlogumû* for a shark and other shark-like fish as subject (the last two would imply a fluttering chicken

hitting someone with its wing, and a shark brushing past someone hitting him with its fin), **kaŷivägûlogumû* for animals tending to change position and appearance quite suddenly (such as crocodiles, grasshoppers etc.), **peŷivägûlogumû* for a person irrespective of sex, and **deŷivägûlogumû* for an animal.

5.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS ON THE ÄYIWO LANGUAGE

What has been outlined in sections 5.1-5.3 seems to indicate that as soon as the Äyiwo people suffered culture clash with resulting changes in their culture from around the middle of the nineteenth century, structural and typological changes began to appear in their language. These changes accelerated after the turn of the century and especially in recent decades, and resulted in the present form of the language as spoken by the young generation in which only vestiges of the former elaborate semantic noun class system and concordance remain, with other complex structural features of the language also in the process of breaking down. During the last two decades, a revivalist movement has been in progress which has arrested the further decay of the language and the culture of its speakers, and may succeed in reversing the decaying process somewhat (Wurm 1991b).

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