

# THE WAMBO DIALECT KWAMBI AS COMPARED TO NDONGA

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The work behind this text started with the intention of describing the Kwambi (or “Ochikwambi”) dialect of Wambo (or “Oshiwambo”).

But rather than writing full grammars or dictionaries for dialects like Kwambi it seems more effective to state the differences between the dialect in question and one of the literary dialects of the language, and then assume that features which are not mentioned as being different are as described for the grammar and the dictionary of the closest literary dialect.

When we compare Kwambi with the two standardized dialects it is closer to Ndonga than to Kwanyama, and because of this I have chosen to concentrate on the differences between Kwambi and Ndonga rather than the differences between Kwambi and Kwanyama.

## 2. BACKGROUND

Oshiwambo is the first language of approximately 50 % of the population of Namibia, and it is also spoken in Angola. It is a Bantu language consisting of a number of dialects (the figures ranging from 7 to 12 according to various sources), and Ochikwambi is one of them. In the text below it will simply be referred to as “Kwambi” in line with the common international practice to omit the Bantu prefixes, just as Oshiwambo will be referred to as “Wambo” and Oshindonga will be referred to as “Ndonga”.

Fourie (1994) estimates the number of speakers of Kwambi to be 81 000, which would mean around 5 % of the population of Namibia. Of course, figures like this one have to be treated with caution in the modern situation, where it is not always easy to say what dialect a person speaks because of various degrees of mixing of the dialects in urban areas, but it seems likely that Kwambi should be considered the third in size of the Wambo dialects.

Kwambi is not considered a literary dialect in the same way as Kwanyama and Ndonga, and there is no established orthography, but there are Kwambi books. The Catholic church started missionary activities in the Kwambi district (Uukwambi) in 1924, and during the 20<sup>th</sup> century it produced religious literature in Kwambi. A list of the books published before 1962 can be found in Dammann (1962). To that list can be added at least two books, one first published in 1969, “One Efamilia Rjandje”, and “Okatekimusa Okatshona”, published in 1983. Written material published by the Catholic Church in Owamboland today, such as information booklets, is produced in Ndonga. The written material considered in the present study was written by missionaries in collaboration with some local Kwambi-speaking people.

The mixing of dialects is inevitable in the modern situation, with people moving from rural areas into towns and cities, people being exposed to other dialects on radio and in school, and intermarriage between separate Owambo groups.

One factor that was mentioned to me by a man whose speech is included in my material is the return of Namibians from the exile they had been in during the war

with South African forces 1966 - 1990. During the exile people from different Owambo groups lived together, and when they returned they returned with a more mixed “Oshiwambo”. They were also highly influential people, and the return of the exiled was apparently something which speeded up the process of dialect mixing.

Kwambi was the dialect used by the Catholic mission, but today even most Catholic churches do not use the Kwambi New Testament, but the Ndonga translation. That is one way that even old people in rural areas become exposed to Ndonga, people that would otherwise not be.

However, at this point it is still often obvious from where a Wambo speaker hails, and an investigation of the different dialects is not only a “digging in the past”. Nevertheless, in this study it would not have been appropriate to go and record the speech of any person in the Kwambi area (Uukwambi), since only some speakers keep a more distinct variety with most of the features that this study aims to reveal. Presumably, the risk of Kwambi influence on Ndonga is much smaller, but there is of course the possibility of for example Kwanyama influence in the speech of Ndonga speakers.

Studies on the dialects can help to establish where certain features come from when the day comes when it makes more sense to speak about Wambo as one unit than to mention the names of the different dialects. Presumably the effect of Kwambi on a future Wambo will be substantial, not least because of the fact that the rapidly growing town/city of Oshakati (the regional centre of the Owambo area) is located in Uukwambi.

### 3. MATERIAL AND METHOD:

#### 3.1. The Kwambi material:

Old people in the rural Kwambi areas and (in a few cases) people from Oshakati who were said to speak a relatively strong form of Kwambi were asked to speak about something, and they were then recorded. These monologues/stories vary in length between a few minutes to almost an hour. One story told in Kwambi on NBC Oshiwambo radio was also recorded (23 minutes long). Altogether there is approximately five hours of recorded Kwambi material.

These stories were then transcribed (and most of them were also translated) by me and two assistants, Johanna Nakambonde (August 2001-December 2002) and Teenage Iitula (April 2003), hailing from Otuwara in Uukwambi and Okaku in Uukwambi respectively. They can be seen at <http://hem.passagen.se/larsmagnusson/>.

This text is then based on this material, some of the Kwambi books produced by the Catholic church (*Etestamente Epe* (except the gospels of Mark, Luke and John), *Omahokoro go mo Bibeli*, *One Efamilia Rjandje* and *Okatekimusa Okatshona*)<sup>1</sup>, and to some extent on my own observations during three years of living in the Oshakati area (out of those three years I was a resident of Ochaandja village in Uukwambi for one and a half years and a resident of Okaku village in Uukwambi for a few months).

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<sup>1</sup> Note that when a word from the Kwambi literature is cited in this text the spelling has been made to conform with the spelling used in this study.

### 3.2. The Ndonga material:

For the comparison with Ndonga there was plenty of material describing this dialect. Grammatical descriptions have been produced as well as some dictionaries.

28 traditional stories from Tirronen & Dammann's *Ndonga-Anthologie* were analyzed. This is material similar in nature to that in the Catholic Kwambi books, in that it reflects an older and 'purer' version of the dialect, but it shares with the Kwambi literature the disadvantages of being *written* language. In writing a writer may, for instance, choose to use only one form even where there are several alternating forms in the colloquial language (not to mention the fact that the written texts are almost useless for phonetic investigations). Therefore it would of course not be appropriate to compare a spoken Kwambi corpus with only written Ndonga, and to avoid a written-language bias a number of Ndonga recordings were also considered.

The spoken Ndonga material consists mainly of recordings of four Ndonga speakers, which were recorded as part of the History Research Project at the University of Namibia. Added together the analyzed parts have a length of approximately four hours. The second part of the material consists of a few shorter recordings made by me, five old people in rural Ondonga. The length of these recordings varies from only one up to eight minutes. These shorter ones do not contribute much to the discussion of the vocabulary in spoken Ndonga, but are useful for some phonetic observations. Two factors deserve to be mentioned:

- 1) The main part of the Ndonga material is not gender-balanced, since these four speakers are all men. In the shorter recordings there are four women speaking, but these recordings are very short, only a few minutes each. I am not aware of any sociolinguistic study describing gender differences in Wambo.
- 2) In contrast to most of the Kwambi speakers recorded, the speakers of the main part of the Ndonga material were not aware that the recordings would be used for dialect comparisons. We will never know whether they would have spoken differently had they been aware of this.

However, none of these two factors seems to be a problem of any significance, and it was decided that the material could be used for the present study.

The recordings were transcribed but not translated. In the work with the transcriptions I was assisted by Katrina Nangombe, hailing from Olukonda in Ondonga. One of the transcriptions was produced by the above-mentioned history project at UNAM, with only minor additions needed.

As with Kwambi, my observations of Ndonga during three years in the Oshakati area were considered to some extent.

### 3.3. The informants:

The material must be considered comprehensive enough for most issues investigated. However, in the case of words that occur with a low frequency a very large corpus would be needed to establish the facts with a high degree of certainty. It is always difficult to prove the absence of something. If a word which is not used frequently occurs once or twice in the Kwambi material but not in the Ndonga material, does that mean that it can be said to be absent from Ndonga (or vice versa)? Because of this the opinions of three other persons were considered for the vocabulary section. The three men will be referred to as "the three informants", and they were chosen because of

their expertise in the Wambo language and the dialects in question. Informant V (Vilho Tshilongo) is a local historian from Elim. Informant E (Engelbert Atshipara) is currently the mayor of Oshakati but has a background as a teacher at Okatana. Informant P (Petrus Amakali) is the manager of a bookshop in Oshakati. He grew up in Oniipa in Ondonga, and has been the author or co-author of many books about Ndonga.

All three informants also contributed recordings, and it is important to point out that they were recorded **before** they were used as informants. Had it been done the other way around their ways of speaking could have been influenced by their knowledge of my ideas concerning Kwambi features and Ndonga features.

Informants V and E are primarily Kwambi informants, and informant P is the Ndonga informant. This means that sometimes it was not necessary to ask all three men about a specific word, when there was no doubt about the situation in one of the dialects.

## 4. SOUND CORRESPONDENCES

### 4.1. The liquid phoneme:

The Wambo dialects have only one liquid phoneme.

The realization of the liquid phoneme as something “r-like” in Kwambi has been noted earlier (e.g. Dammann, Baucom, Maho). In fact, the books produced by the Catholic mission use the letter ‘r’ instead of ‘l’ consistently (except for names like Pilatus, Galilea etc.), even in the combination ‘rj’ denoting a palatal lateral.

The Ndonga orthography on the other hand uses ‘l’ to represent the liquid phoneme, and the difference “r vs. l” is sometimes mentioned as a difference between the two dialects.

Since the spoken material used in this study consists of authentic speech there are many cases where we have neither a clear lateral nor a clear tap where one would be expected in slow speech or writing. However, considering the clear cases the overwhelming majority have [r] in the Kwambi material.

Dammann says that it has another realization before non-syllabic [i] (as in for example *iilya*, or *lyandje*, spelt “rjandje” in the title of one of the Kwambi books). It is true that there is never a tap pronunciation in these words, but the letters ‘l’ and ‘r’ in the letter combinations ‘ly’/‘ry’/‘rj’ in Kwambi do not represent the liquid phoneme that we are dealing with here. Instead the letter combination ‘ly’ used in the transcriptions of my spoken Kwambi material (and the ‘rj’ of the Catholic books) must be seen as corresponding to another phoneme, /ʎ/ (see section 4.2).

There is however a tendency to have [l] before **syllabic** [i] in Kwambi. The distribution of [l] in Kwambi is not completely free, if we intend “free” to mean that it is used randomly. It is much less likely to occur before the non-front vowels [a], [ɔ] and [u]. Especially before [a] lateral pronunciations are very rare. Before [i] on the other hand it is not uncommon at all, as mentioned above. The common grammatical morpheme *li* for example, is often pronounced [li], and in the spoken Kwambi corpus there are words like for instance *mbali* [mbali] and *iiroli* [i:rɔli]. This seems to hold true for many cases in my material, even though there are tap pronunciations before [i] as well.

To a lesser extent the other front vowel [ɛ] leads to a lateral pronunciation. This shows itself in for example the fact that for the common word *rera* there are many cases with the pronunciation [lɛra] in addition to [rɛra], but no cases of [rɛla].

The tendency mentioned above, with 'l' in the transcriptions more likely to occur before the front vowels [i] and [ɛ] than before the other three vowels, actually goes against a trend discovered by Ladefoged&Maddieson (1996:243). According to them **back** vowels seem to predispose towards production (or perception) of lateral variants, and **front** vowels towards rhotic variants.

Further, before the semivowel [w] the frequency of tap pronunciations is not very high. This is a position where many cases have been transcribed with a slash '/', i.e. neither a clear [l] nor a clear [r], and in the clear cases [l] is about as common as [r], although there is a great deal of variation between individuals. Syllabic 'm' is the only consonant that occurs before the liquid phoneme in indigenous words, and this consonant has a tendency to induce a lateral pronunciation.

Maho (1998:66) states that Kwambi has a tremulant, with a flap as an allophonic variant, but in my material the number of tremulant/trill pronunciations is very small. One of them occurs when a speaker illustrates how speakers of other dialects sometimes speak when they imitate Kwambi speakers in a caricature way.

Even though [r] vs. [l] for the liquid phoneme is sometimes brought forward as distinguishing Kwambi and Ndonga, a tap-realization of the phoneme occurs in Ndonga too. Fivaz (1986:4) mentions two different pronunciations of the phoneme, and he calls them "voiced alveolar continuant" and "voiced alveolar retroflexive flap" respectively. Hasheela, Amakali&Namundi (1985:10) talk about a voiced alveolar lateral, but they add that it can be pronounced in a different way as well, with the tip of the tongue "galloping" ("tayi lapata") and the sound approaching 'r', and they call this pronunciation 'alveolar rolled consonant' although they use the phonetic symbol [l̥]. According to Viljoen&Amakali (1980:7-8) this phoneme "is realized as either an alveolar voiced lateral continuant or as a retroflexive voiced alveolar flap". Note that Viljoen&Amakali use the symbol [r] for what they call the retroflexive flap, and that they say at another place that the Ndonga 'l'-sound varies between a clear 'l' and the 'r' sound. These are indications that they may indeed have noticed what is here called the tap pronunciation, and the seemingly different descriptions may be a result of terminological confusion.

Fivaz states that there is free variation between the two different pronunciations in Ndonga, and the other books do not state what the distribution is.

The speakers in the spoken Ndonga material generally have relatively large numbers of taps, but most of them have significantly lower frequencies of [r] than the average Kwambi speaker. However, there is a degree of variation between speakers, and some Ndongas have frequencies comparable to some of the Kwambis, perhaps even higher than some, even though the Ndonga recordings tend to be rather short, which leads to a lower degree of statistical significance for some Ndonga speakers.<sup>2</sup> The tendency for more lateral pronunciations before [i] can be found in the Ndonga recordings as well, but it must be pointed out that the tendency is far from categorical, just as in Kwambi. There are also considerably more lateral pronunciations before [ɛ]

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<sup>2</sup> One of the Ndonga recordings from the main part of the material is highly deviant. This speaker pronounces the liquid phoneme very softly, and since the sound quality also is not very good most instances of the liquid phoneme in this transcript have had to be marked '/'. In those cases which have been written as 'l' or 'r' very few have 'r'.

than before [a], but when comparing [ɛ] to the other two non-front vowels there is no significant difference.

Some educational materials meant for teaching Ndonga to non-native speakers deserve to be mentioned here. They were not included in the material for this study since they do not contain authentic speech, but one must note that on these instructional tapes the lateral pronunciation [l] dominates much more than in the other Ndonga recordings. Informant P believes that it could be because of speakers on the instructional tapes being from the east. Another surmise regarding [l] on these tapes would be that [l] is more likely to occur in slow, careful Wambo speech. No systematic investigation was conducted within the present study to see the effect of speed and formality of the situation on the realization of the liquid phoneme, but there are some indications that this may be the case.

Informant P says that there is a difference between eastern and western Ondonga concerning the pronunciation of the liquid phoneme, with more [l] in the east, and more [r] in the west. It is then not surprising that we find that when comparing the nine speakers in the spoken Ndonga material the ones with most taps in their speech are the women from Okaku<sup>3</sup>, which is in the far west of Ondonga, located close to Uukwambi.

Younger speakers in the rural Kwambi areas often have a frequency of tap pronunciations similar to the recorded speakers. Considering the fact that the recorded speakers were chosen among speakers using a relatively strong Kwambi dialect (many of them being elderly people) we can conclude that this is an aspect where influence from dialects using more laterals is not significant among the younger generation.

In the transcriptions of the spoken material no effort has been made to distinguish a tap pronunciation from a flap pronunciation. The emphasis has been on distinguishing lateral (“l-like”) pronunciations from more tap-like (“r-like”) ones. The audible difference between taps and flaps is subtle (and many times the audible difference between an alveolar flap and an alveolar lateral is just as subtle<sup>4</sup>). Experimental phonetic techniques would probably be needed to settle the question regarding the flaps and taps in a definite way. There is no doubt that in the Kwambi material as well as in the Ndonga material some instances denoted ‘/’ in the transcripts (indicating neither a clear lateral nor a clear tap) has a flap pronunciation (see Ladefoged&Maddieson (1996) for a discussion of the differences between tap and flap), and probably even some cases which have been denoted ‘l’ or ‘r’. However, it seems clear that the most common Kwambi realization of the liquid phoneme is a tap.

We can note that Wisskirchen (1935) claims that the tap pronunciation (or “das ‘r’” as he calls it) was not present in older times, but was introduced in Owamboland by people who had been working in “Hereroland”. It is not clear what he bases this statement on. He further says that this sound is not a pure “tongue r”, but rather something in between “l” and “r” (Wisskirchen 1935:2).

To sum up, it can be said that Kwambi generally has more tap realizations of the liquid phoneme than Ndonga, but the contrast “r vs. l” would be more striking if

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<sup>3</sup> Note that there are several different Owambo villages named Okaku.

<sup>4</sup> Ladefoged&Maddieson (1996:243) even have a term “lateral flap”.

we instead were to compare Kwambi with Kwanyama.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, Fourie (1992:17) reports the use of ‘r’ in addition to ‘l’ in writing Ndonga in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The first ten minutes of every Ndonga recording from the main part of the spoken Ndonga material were checked carefully for “r vs. l”, and the remaining Ndonga recordings and all the Kwambi recordings - except the radio recording and the two recorded lastly - were checked in their entirety. This subjective listening test for Kwambi resulted in 1640 instances of the liquid phoneme classified as ‘r’, 665 as ‘l’, and 1729 as ‘/’, and for Ndonga the result was 264 ‘r’, 269 ‘l’ and 687 ‘/’.<sup>6</sup>

#### 4.2. The written sequence ‘ly’:

There is no case in the Kwambi material where the letter sequence ‘ly’ in the transcripts represents a sequence [lj]. Sometimes in rapid, relaxed authentic speech the phoneme in question is pronounced very much like the semivowel [j], but basically we are dealing with a palatal lateral consonant [ɬ]. According to Johanna Nakambonde a pronunciation with a lateral sound followed by a semivowel (i.e. [lj]) would rather be found further west in Ongandjera and Uukwaludhi.

In the Ndonga recordings the situation is slightly different. In addition to cases sounding like the Kwambi [ɬ] there are some cases where the pronunciation is more reminiscent of a sequence alveolar lateral-semivowel. However, after only listening, not using experimental phonetic techniques, I would not want to make a statement as to whether we are dealing with a true sequence [lj] or a palatalized alveolar lateral [lʲ].

For Kwambi the case is clear, the historical sequence /lj/ has changed to the modern phoneme /ɬ/. For Ndonga there may still be a ground for arguing that it is still /lj/, but with a change being under way, or perhaps one should say “with a change being far gone”, because most of these pronunciations sound like [ɬ] rather than anything else, and out of those pronunciations that do sound like a sequence [lj] most are in the speech of one particular person.

#### 4.3. Regular correspondences in the vocabulary:

The topic of sound correspondences between Kwambi and Ndonga is complex, in that there are not simple correspondences such as “every instance of x in Kwambi is y in Ndonga”, but we find one Kwambi sound corresponding to one Ndonga sound in some words but to another Ndonga sound in other words, or vice versa.

One feature that is often mentioned by speakers themselves is the presence of an affricate [tʃ] in Kwambi. This is of course also reflected in the spelling of the name of the dialect itself (Ochikwambi or Otshikwambi). However, it is not as simple as a

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<sup>5</sup> Two of the Kwambi speakers have rather high numbers of [l], and could easily be mistaken for Ndongas if all other features were ignored and only the ratio “l vs. r” were considered.

<sup>6</sup> These figures give an impression of accuracy, but I must point out that another listener might have come up with different numbers. To some extent a subjective listening test like this always depends on the way a person’s mother tongue classifies the sounds in question. Note also that the number of ‘/’ in the Ndonga material would surely have been a bit lower had it not been for the poor sound quality of two of the recordings.

simple substitution. Even though there are many cases where Kwambi [tʃ] corresponds to Ndonga [ʃ]:

*-chona.-shona* (small), *chuna.shuna* (go back), *ochiri.oshili* (truth), *chike.shike* (what), *ichewe.ishewe* (again), the prefix for noun class 7 *ochi-.oshi-*, *chinga.shinga* (loaf about), *onyuchi.onyushi* (bee), *chacha.shasha* (baptize), *chi.shi* (know, believe), *-chimba.-shimba* (Herero), *chita.shita* (create), *chito.shito* (usually, habitually), *omuchira.omushila* (tail), *changa.shanga* (write, draw), *cha.sha* (anything), *Ochomeya.Oshomeya* (the town of Tsumeb), *omuchiinda.omushiinda* (neighbour), etc.

there are also words and morphemes which have [ʃ] in Kwambi. There are those words where a Kwambi [ʃ] corresponds to a Ndonga [ʃ]:

*sho* (when), *shaashi* (because), *epushu* (woman's hind apron), *oshapi* (key), *okambishi* (cat), *ochikushu/oshikushu* (copper-brown colour), *eshisha* (granary, corn bin), *onkoshi* (lion), *resha/lesha* (read), the demonstratives of noun class 7 (*shino*, *shono*, etc.), the word *shi* occurring in some negative constructions<sup>7</sup>, *shila* (maybe, except if), and possibly some others,

but this group is relatively small.

There is then a large group of words where a Kwambi [ʃ] corresponds to a Ndonga [x]:

*eshara.ehala* (place), *eshiyo.ehiyo* (invitation), *ochikasha.oshikaha* (hand), words denoting 'all, the whole', i.e. *ayeshe.ayehe*, *arushe.aluhe* etc., *keshe.kehe* (each, every), *esho.eho* (eye), *oshi.ohi* (fish), *she.he* (his/her father), *sho.ho* (your father), *-shupi.-hupi* (short), *ondjashi.ondjahi* (anger), *poshi.pohi* (down), *shinga.hinga* (drive), *sharakanitha.halakanitha* (disperse), *shinda.hinda* (irritate) *orumosho.olumoho* (left – as opposed to right), *shugunina.hugunina* (lastly, finally) etc.

There are also words where Kwambi [h] corresponds to Ndonga [x]:

*ohore.ohole* (love), *ohera.ohela* (yesterday), *ohema* (shirt), *ohango* (wedding), as well as *ehokololo* and many other verbal nouns from class 5 (see section 4.7), and possibly some others.

For the correspondence verb-initial Ndonga [x] vs. Kwambi 0 see section 4.7.

#### 4.4. The two pronunciations of the Ndonga letter 'h':

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<sup>7</sup> One example would be *kandi shi ondjambameya* (= 'I am not a hippopotamus'). This gives rise to a contrast not found in Ndonga, namely between the above sentence and *kandi chi ondjambameya* (= 'I don't know the hippopotamus'), where Ndonga would have *shi* in both cases. Wisskirchen's claim that *chi* is also used in sentences like the first one must be erroneous. In all the spoken narratives as well as in the Kwambi literature only *shi* is used in these cases, *chi* being reserved for the meaning 'know'.



All grammatical descriptions of Ndonga state that there are two different ways of pronouncing the letter 'h'. One of them is [x]. Fivaz claims that the other pronunciation of 'h' is a voiceless glottal fricative. In Hasheela, Amakali & Namuandi (1985) and Viljoen & Amakali (1978) it is described as a "voiced glottal fricative" and "a voiced oral glottal fricative continuant" respectively. The term "voiced glottal fricative" is a rather unfortunate term for what is better described as a breathy voiced counterpart of the following vowel, or perhaps as a segment which is specified only for laryngeal setting (i.e. breathy voice), but unmarked for all other features (Ladefoged & Maddieson 1996:325-326).

The sound quality of the Ndonga material can be rather unsatisfactory at times, which makes it hard to decide whether the sound is best described as a voiceless glottal fricative or a voiced one.<sup>8</sup> A more careful investigation of the pronunciation of Katrina Nangombe, under laboratory-like recording conditions, reveals that she does not seem to make the distinction, having a velar or uvular fricative even in words such as *omahooli* and *ohinga*. Whether this is a tendency that is common among other young speakers as well is not known to me, and it is a question that would require further research. In describing the second pronunciation, i.e. the one which is not [x], I use the symbol from Haashela, Amakali & Namuandi and Viljoen & Amakali here, i.e. [ɦ]. Informant P explains that the use of [ɦ] is connected to modern words which have come into the language from outside relatively recently. This is consistent with the fact that those words that tend to reoccur in Ndonga grammar books as examples of words having [ɦ] are the words *ohinga* (= 'ink'), *oshihauto* (= 'car') and *omahooli* (= 'oil, petrol'), clearly concepts introduced in Wambo culture relatively recently.

It is difficult to find any minimal pairs in Ndonga contrasting only in this feature [x] vs. [ɦ], mainly of course because of the small number of words having [ɦ]. It seems to be of little practical value to decide whether they constitute separate phonemes, but they are clearly not in complementary distribution.

#### 4.5. More about the affricate [tʃ] in Kwambi:

The usage of the affricate [tʃ] seems to be alive and well among younger Kwambi people, at least in the rural areas. Having said that, we can just briefly note that there are younger speakers who normally use affricates, but do not have an affricate in the name of the town of Oshakati. In my material all five Kwambi speakers who mention the town have an affricate in its name.

Some of the transcripts of the spoken Kwambi material include what may be a surprising frequency of 'sh' where 'ch' would be expected. This is not necessarily due to Ndonga influence but is probably in most cases because of the difficulty to hear the first part of the affricate where there is less than perfect sound quality combined with rapid and relaxed pronunciation.

As with the presence of [r], Wisskirchen explains the existence of the affricate pronunciation with Herero influence. One problem with that theory would be that the affricate exists only in some words, not in all. If we imagine that Ndonga changed,

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<sup>8</sup> There is of course the possibility that both Fivaz and the other authors are correct in a way, since both sounds may occur as allophonic variants, as they do in for example English. Note that although the Kwambi sound is represented here simply as [ɦ], there is no doubt that [ɦ] occurs as well as an allophone in Kwambi.

reducing [tʃ] into [ʃ], we would get the present situation, but it seems that if Kwambi was the dialect undergoing a change a replacement of [ʃ] with [tʃ] should be applied to all words having [ʃ], which is not what we find in reality.

#### 4.6. Nasals before voiced fricatives:

Kwambi does not have a nasal before the dental fricative [ð], which leads to Kwambi-Ndonga pairs like *odhira-ondhila*, *odhopi-ondhopi*, *dhika-ndhika* etc.<sup>9</sup> Also, Kwambi does not have a nasal before the labiodental fricative [v], which gives us at least two word-pairs: *ovura-omvula* and *uuvo-uumvo*, and probably others as well.

The words for ‘funeral’ and ‘bury’ are always *efumbiko* and *fumbika* respectively in Kwambi, whereas in Ndonga these words often have ‘-mv-’ instead of ‘-mb-’.

However, syllabic ‘m’ is different. It occurs before fricatives even in Kwambi, as in *omuvo* [ɔm̩vɔ] and *emuvo* [ɛm̩vɔ].

Somewhat surprisingly, there are words having ‘nz’ in the Kwambi corpus (both written and spoken). These are words such as *nziya*, *naanziya* and *onzi*, which make an exception to the rule “no nasals before fricatives in Kwambi”.

#### 4.7. Verbstem-initial ‘h’:

/h/ is clearly a phoneme in Kwambi, with minimal pairs such as *ha* vs. *ya*, *otahi* vs. *otayi* etc. However, many instances of [h] seem to be cases where the sound has been inserted for other reasons, where it is not strictly speaking a realization of the phoneme /h/.

One fact noted already by Dammann is the lack of [h] in Kwambi words such as *ara* (=‘want’) and *anga* (=‘to brew beer’). He also notes that an [h] is present in words such as these after the concord *a*. This insertion of ‘h’ after the morpheme *a* is not restricted to *ara* and *anga* but can also be found with other verbs starting with vowels, for instance *okana* (=marry) and *udha* (=fill). Furthermore, *a* is not the only morpheme that can lead to insertion of an ‘h’.

It seems that in Kwambi all verbs originally starting with ‘h-’ have lost their initial ‘h’. Only in some contexts does Kwambi have an ‘h-’, but in these contexts ‘h’ is inserted indiscriminately to all stems beginning with a vowel, even those which did not have an ‘h-’ historically.

The contexts which can be called ‘h-inducing’ are:

- a) concords which consist of only a single vowel, most notably noun class 1 past concord *a*
- b) concords of noun class 2 with a long ‘a’ [a:], like for instance present tense *otaa* and habitual *ohaa*
- c) the alternative form of 1<sup>st</sup> person sing. concord (*o*)*te* (habitual (*o*)*he*)
- d) the reflexive prefix ‘i-’<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> There are quite a number of cases where no nasal sound is audible in words like these even in the spoken Ndonga material, but I will assume here that this is because of relaxed pronunciation, as in cases where Kwambis seem to be saying *sh* for an expected *ch* (see section 4.5.).

<sup>10</sup> In fact, it seems that verb-stems starting with a vowel occur with the reflexive prefix very rarely, but from the Kwambi literature it is clear that this is a fourth h-inducing environment. There might be one

In the case of b) there is also another strategy to handle the situation. Where concords meet verbs starting with vowels the final vowel of the concord can be preceded by a semivowel ‘y’ and the vowel itself assimilates to the stem-initial vowel. The latter strategy (giving us for instance *otayuumbu*, *otayiimbi* etc.) seems to be more common in the spoken language than insertion of h (*otaa humbu* etc.), judging from the Kwambi corpus, but there are some cases of h-insertion too (*otaa hara*, *otaa himbi*).

The reason why some concords are h-inducing is probably the fact that contraction in these cases would lead to confusion. In the case of a) above the risk of confusion is obvious: if the vowels were contracted with the following vowel they would be absorbed completely or ‘eaten up’, so to speak. In the case of b) the confusion would be with corresponding noun class 1 forms. Compare the distinction between *otiimbi* and *otaahimbi* which would not exist if the noun class 2 concord too were to become *\*otiimbi*. In the case of c) the confusion would again be with noun class 1 present tense. Compare the distinction between *otiimbi* and *otehimbi* which would not exist if the 1.p.sing concord too were to become *\*otiimbi*.

To avoid these confusions, and to avoid vowels meeting, an ‘h’ is inserted. Note however that when the final vowel of the underlying form of the concord is ‘i’, ‘u’ or ‘o’ it is possible to avoid vowels meeting by turning the vowel of the concord into a semivowel, which gives us cases like *tatwiilongo* (= *tatu ilongo*), *tweende* (= *to ende*) etc.

There is at least one exception. The Kwambi verb *ha* (=go) seems to have an ‘h-’ in the stem since we get an ‘h’ even in contexts other than those mentioned above as ‘h-inducing’. Examples from the corpus are for instance “*ohatu hi kOniimwandi*” (=‘we go to Oniimwandi’) and “*manga inatu ha koVenduka*” (=‘before we went to Windhoek’). There are several instances of h-dropping even for this verb though. The tendency of retaining ‘h’ here is presumably due to the shortness of the stem, a loss of ‘h-’ here would make the word hard to detect in speech.<sup>11</sup>

In the hypothetical case that someone would write a Kwambi dictionary it would make sense to give Kwambi verb-stems without h- (except *ha*), even though initial ‘h-’ occurs in a number of cases. In the corpus there are some cases where an ‘h’ is inserted even in contexts which have not been presented here as h-inducing, and they are cases where the corresponding Ndonga verb indeed starts with ‘h-’. Although I do not deny that there are Kwambi speakers who can do this, it still needs to be mentioned that for a person from a strictly oral Kwambi environment it must be far from obvious that words such as *humbata* and *hambelela* require an initial ‘h’ in writing whereas *uluka* and *angala* should not have one. I assume that inserting h’s correctly is a skill that needs to be learnt through exposure to Ndonga, written or spoken (but preferably written, since even in spoken Ndonga there seems to be occasional insertion of ‘h’ where it should not be according to prescriptive norms, see below). In the Kwambi material most exceptions to the rules for Kwambi h-insertion presented here come in the speech of the priest from Oniimwandi and the mayor of Oshakati. The priest from Oniimwandi has been living in Uukwambi all his life, but being a priest he is also a highly literate person. It is probably not a coincidence then

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example in the spoken Kwambi corpus, even though that example – *ihendere* (=‘walk alone’) – has not been analyzed into its constituent parts in the transcript since it is not a typical case of a reflexive meaning of the verb (see point 13 in the explanation of the interlinear coding). However, the ‘h’ there is pronounced very weakly.

<sup>11</sup> Note however that in the corpus all cases of the derived form *hiwa* occur in a contracted form without ‘h’.

that these two are the ones inserting verb-initial ‘h’ where they are expected to be in written Ndonga (and even these speakers do not do it consistently, but in many cases follow the Kwambi pattern).

In at least two cases in the spoken Ndonga corpus we find a verb-initial ‘h’ where it should not be according to dictionaries. Both these cases that have been found in Ndonga come in the speech of the speaker who is not residing in Ondonga but in Windhoek. Although this does not prove anything, it raises the question whether his insertion of ‘h-’ could be due to influence from other dialects. No clear answer to this question has been found within the present study, though. The h-insertion of this Ndonga speaker seems to be more random than the Kwambi h-insertion, since one of the cases is in a context which is not h-inducing in Kwambi. Informant P says that this kind of h-insertion is not a phenomenon traditionally found in Ndonga.

## 5. MORPHOLOGICAL CORRESPONDENCES

### 5.1. Noun class 4:

In the Kwambi books the prefix *eem(u)*-<sup>12</sup> is consistently used for noun class 4,<sup>13</sup> which can be contrasted with Ndonga *omi*-. Interestingly, informant V says that the prefix written *eem*- or *eemu*- in the Kwambi literature in reality is *em(u)*-, i.e. a single vowel initially. The recorded material does not really contradict his view (although in many cases it is difficult to tell apart a long vowel and a short one in rapid authentic speech), and some other consulted Kwambi speakers agree. Informant E however believes that the prefix indeed has a long vowel, but in his own pronunciation the vowel sound is distinctly shorter than the vowel of the noun class 10 prefix *ee*-. The issue seems to be a bit sensitive, with informant V and informant E being of different opinions and both being emphatic about their standpoints. In my transcripts I have written a single vowel in most cases, since this reflects the actual pronunciation better in those cases, but in a few cases where the speaker seems to have a longer vowel I have used the spelling with double ‘e’. It may be debatable to what extent a pronunciation with a long vowel occurs in the noun class 4 prefix, but it is likely that this is an older pronunciation. That would explain this innovation in Kwambi and some other western Wambo dialects (see section 5.2.).

What is clear is that the vowel is long in those cases where the noun class 4 prefix is *eemw*-, i.e. when the noun stem has an initial vowel, as in for example *eemw-edhi* (=‘months’), plural of *omw-edhi*.

In the spoken Kwambi material *omi*- can be found in some otherwise strong Kwambi narratives (although *emu*- is found in some other narratives). If the use of *omi*- were just because of Ndonga influence we would have to ask ourselves why there has been so much Ndonga influence with noun class 4 so as to influence even old people with strong Kwambi speech, but no influence whatsoever on noun class 10 (there is no case of Ndonga *oo*- for noun class 10 in my Kwambi material whatsoever, except a few easily explained ones (see next section), but hundreds of *ee*-). If we insist that *omi*- in Kwambi is due to later outside influence the reason for the observed

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<sup>12</sup> The bracketed ‘u’ has been put here to show that an ‘u’ is not pronounced, but the preceding nasal is syllabic. The standard Ndonga orthography uses ‘u’ in this way for Ndonga syllabic nasals.

<sup>13</sup> The only exception to this is the word *omitiri*, which occurs instead of *eemutiri* in “Okatekimusa Okatshona”, the most recent of the Kwambi publications included in the present study.

facts could of course be that the influence is from Kwanyama, which has *omi-* for class 4 but *ee-* for class 10 just like Kwambi.

If we instead assume that both *omi-* and *emu-* have been existing as alternatives even before the modern-day interference from other dialects, then this could explain the contradicting claims by Baucom (1972) and Fourie (1994). Baucom claims that *omi-* is used in Kwambi for class 4, whereas Fourie has *eem(u)-* in his chart.

There could possibly be a difference between the eastern and western parts of Uukwambi in this feature (see section 9 for further elaboration).

Informants V and E claim that both *omi-* and *emu-* have been used in Kwambi even in older times.

In contrast to for example the forms for good and bad in the Kwambi literature as seen in section 8.2, it is not difficult to find young people using *emu-* in spontaneous conversation with people the same age. Hence it does not seem to be the case that the use of this prefix is disappearing at present, although it must also be said that some young people with a Kwambi background seem to have dropped the use of *emu-* in favour of *omi-*.

The use of *omi-* rather than *emu-* seems to be particularly common when counting, e.g. 20 = *omilongo mbali*, 30 = *omilongo ndatu* etc., rather than *emulongo mbali* etc. (see section 8.3. about words for counting).

## 5.2. Noun class 10:

Kwambi *ee-* is used as the prefix for noun class 10, instead of Ndonga *oo-*. This is a more pervasive feature than the use of *emu-* for noun class 4. Indeed, there is not a single case of *oo-* for this noun class in the Kwambi material, except for a few cases where a Kwambi speaker is interacting with a Ndonga speaker sitting by the same table. Similarly, there is not a single case of *ee-* for noun class 10 in the Ndonga material but hundreds of *oo-*.

The existence of this noun class 10-prefix *ee-* could be the reason for the rise of *emu-* as a class 4 prefix. We would then be dealing with a reinterpretation of the first vowel in the class 3-prefix *omu-* as being the prefix by itself, which would make the words from class 3 have the ‘o’-prefix of class 9. By analogy the plural forms would then be formed by replacing *o-* with *ee-*. If that is the story behind this Kwambi innovation then the vowel has been shortened before syllabic ‘m’ at a later stage (see section 5.1).<sup>14</sup>

## 5.3. ‘Lyi’ instead of Ndonga ‘li’:

Another feature to be discussed here is the Kwambi use of the palatal lateral phoneme instead of the liquid phoneme in words showing agreement with noun class 5. This gives forms such as *lyimwe*, *inalyi*, *lyini*, *alyishe* etc. instead of (written) Ndonga *limwe*, *inali*, *lini*, *alihe* etc. In addition, the word *li* meaning ‘eat’ occurs in the form /*li*/ in the recordings, although there are also many cases of /*ɾi*/ for this word.

Some might want to argue that this feature should not be included in this comparison of Kwambi and Ndonga, since it can be found in spoken Ndonga as well.

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<sup>14</sup> In cases where the stem begins with a vowel, so that the prefix has the form *omw-*, the phenomenon can be found in Ndonga too, e.g. class 3 *omwedhi* vs. class 4 *oomwedhi*, class 3 *omwelo* vs. class 4 *oomwelo* (where *oomwelo* is an alternative to the form *omiyelo*) (Tirronen 1965:24).

But it is more common in the Kwambi material, and there are some indications that the use of the liquid phoneme in modern Kwambi could be because of modern-day Ndonga influence. Informant P believes that the opposite may also be true, i.e. that the use of *lyi*-forms in Ndonga could be due to outside influence.

In the spoken Kwambi material there are instances of use of the liquid phoneme in such circumstances, although it is not very frequent. Interestingly, there is no trace of the use of the palatal lateral for these forms in the Kwambi literature, which otherwise tends to use old Kwambi words and forms consistently. We instead find *rimwe*, *arishe* etc.

Two of the Ndonga speakers in the main part of the spoken Ndonga material use *lyi* instead of *li* (*kalyi na...*, *lyi kale lyi na ompango yimwe...* etc.), and it seems that two of the speakers in the shorter recordings also have one instance each. However, in written Ndonga it would be considered wrong. Of the two Ndonga speakers referred to one is from Olukonda, which is relatively close to Uukwambi, whereas the other speaker is a resident of Wanaheda in Windhoek and is reported to be from Okankolo originally (Okankolo is in eastern Ondonga). The two speakers in the shorter recordings that have one instance each are both from the Onayena area. It is then not the case that the use of *lyi* in Ndonga is restricted to parts close to Uukwambi.

The material leaves us with the question whether the alternation in the spoken Kwambi corpus is a reflection of Ndonga influence or whether it reflects an old Kwambi usage with alternating forms. One of the informants, V, claims that in the old days Kwambi people did not use the forms with the liquid phoneme (*/rimwe/*, */rini/* etc.), but the palatal ones. However, informant E believes that both the forms with the liquid phoneme and the ones with the palatal phoneme have been used even in older times. A common pattern in the recordings is for the Kwambi speakers to use both palatals and liquid phonemes in these cases, but with palatals in clear majority. Interestingly, the expression *esiku limwe* seems to be much more likely to be pronounced with the liquid phoneme than other cases. All instances of *esiku limwe* in the spoken Kwambi corpus have the liquid phoneme, even for speakers who otherwise use the palatal lateral more or less consistently. Informant P claims that the use of the liquid phoneme is the only traditional way of saying these things in Ndonga.

With the evidence being slightly contradictory, one hypothesis can be put forward here which is compatible with the conflicting claims. It seems that the use of the *lyi*-forms is an innovation, the *li*-forms being older. Being innovations the *lyi*-forms may have been seen as inappropriate for religious literature, even though they may have been very dominating in the contemporary spoken Kwambi of the time, perhaps also occurring in Ndonga.

Although this study cannot reach a conclusion about to what extent traditional Kwambi and Ndonga are different with regard to this feature, it was felt that there is a need to bring attention to the existence of the feature, since it is completely absent from written Wambo material. For example, Fourie (1994) only includes the alternative with the liquid phoneme in it (“li”). Baucom (1972) gives “r<sup>y</sup>i” as the Kwambi object concord for noun class 5, which is an indication that he was aware of the phenomenon, but [r<sup>y</sup>] would normally be interpreted as representing a palatalized alveolar trill, and there is no such thing in Kwambi or Ndonga. For the subject concord he has “li”.

#### 5.4. Kwambi [h] instead of Ndonga [j]:

This leads to a consistent morphological distinction in Kwambi between noun classes 8 and 9 where Ndonga has none, for example with the object forms being *yi* and *hi* respectively, auxiliaries *otayi* vs. *otahi*<sup>15</sup>, *oya* vs. *oha*, *oyi* vs. *ohi*, pronouns *yo* vs. *ho*, *ayishe* vs. *ahishe* etc. In all these cases Ndonga has ‘y’ (= [j]) for both class 8 and class 9.

The use of [h] in these cases seems to be a pervasive feature, found also in the speech of young people in Uukwambi. There are also some words in the vocabulary where there is a similar correspondence between Kwambi ‘h’ and Ndonga ‘y’ (see section 8.2).

### 5.5. Habitual negative

In the Kwambi material we find two strategies to produce habitual negative forms. On the one hand there is a strategy using *ka* plus an ending indicating person or noun class number, such as *kandi*, *katu*, *kaa* etc. On the other hand there is also a strategy which gives rise to forms identical to the habitual positive forms except for having an initial ‘i-’ instead of ‘o-’. This latter strategy then gives forms such as *ihandi*, *ihatu*, *ihaa* etc.

In most of the Ndonga material there is no trace of the habitual negative using forms of the *ka*-type. The grammar books also do not discuss them much. Only Tirronen (1965:64) has a chart which includes for instance *kandi longa*, but Fivaz has no chart which includes any of these forms, only one example *kali leshwa* (Fivaz 1986:126), which is translated as ‘it cannot be read’ (but he has no further explanation of these forms).

In the recording of the speaker from Olukonda there are two sentences in which it seems as if the speaker could be using a *ka*-form similar to those in the Kwambi narratives, but in both cases another interpretation is possible (for example, in one case it seems more likely that the speaker is actually using the negative participial concord *kaadhi*). There is one isolated case in the written Ndonga stories - *kaa dhitika* (Tirronen&Dammann 1975:97) - but informant P explains that it occurs in what is an idiom (*oonamuhondja kaa dhitika*) meaning white people. In this idiom *ihaa* would not be used.

The question can be asked whether both strategies have existed in traditional Kwambi. At first glance it would seem that they have, because three of the Kwambi speakers use both strategies. However, when we consider the details and look at correlations between the use of the two strategies and other features which have been found to be traditional Kwambi features we find that those whose vocabularies show the least Ndonga influence use *ka*-forms consistently, and the only speaker who uses more *iha*-forms than *ka*-forms (6 vs. 2) is one of the younger and more urban speakers. For the remaining two speakers who use *iha*-forms at all one old rural woman has six *ka*-forms and one *iha*-form, and a rural priest of around 70 years of age has two *ka*-forms and one *iha*-form. Indeed, if we ignore the more urban speaker we find 46 uses of the *ka*-strategy in the spoken Kwambi corpus as opposed to only 2 instances of the *iha*-strategy.

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<sup>15</sup> The claim of Fourie (1994) that the use of ‘h’ and ‘y’ is different for the subject and object concords is erroneous. The claim is that the forms with ‘h’ would be used for noun class 8 and the forms with ‘y’ for noun class 9.

Since this phenomenon was discovered at a late stage in the research only parts of the written Kwambi material were checked for this feature, but those few hundred pages that were checked contain only *ka*-forms.

E says that *iha*-forms have been in use in traditional Kwambi, although rarely, and informant V also believes that the *iha*-forms have been used. Informant P states that the use of the *ka*-forms in Ndonga is very limited.

In conclusion we can then say that the *iha*-forms may have been used in the Kwambi of old times, but if so they must have been very rare. In Ndonga there are a few traces of the use of *ka*-forms, but this usage may not be very much alive.

## 5.6. Subjunctive and participial negatives

In Ndonga grammar books we find one set of morphemes used in the subjunctive negative, and three sets of morphemes - one of them almost identical to the subjunctive negative concords - used in participial clauses (for a clear overview see Viljoen&Amakali (1978:98-99,105)). To sum up the situation, in Ndonga there are concords of the type *ndaa*, *waa*, *yaa*, *pwaa* etc. to be used in the subjunctive negative, and for the so-called defective verbs<sup>16</sup> in the participial negative as well. The alternative concords used in participial negatives are basically like the normal negative concords but with a long second vowel (*itaandi* instead of *itandi*, *kaandi* instead of *kandi* etc.). In the spoken Kwambi material all forms of the type *ndaa*, *waa*, *yaa*, *pwaa* etc. are absent. The two other sets of participial forms used for Ndonga also seem to be missing (although it must be said that vowel length can be difficult to hear in authentic speech).

Very few of the Kwambi speakers recorded actually use the subjunctive negative, but it is found at least three times, and there we have the concords *kaa*, *kandi* and *katu*, instead of *yaa*, *ndaa* and *twaa* which we would expect in Ndonga. The Ndonga forms have also not been found in the written Kwambi material despite the fact that there are many cases of subjunctive negative there. The issue came to my attention at a late stage, and so only relatively small parts of the Kwambi literature have been checked for this feature, but those few hundred pages that were checked are all lacking the forms under discussion, i.e. all the negative forms found on pages 98, 99 and 105 of Viljoen&Amakali (1978).

In those cases in the spoken Kwambi material where there are negative participial forms the speakers rather use forms such as *kawu* and *kagu*, seemingly with no lengthening of the vowel. The written material only supports this idea further.

The Kwambi informants say that the forms from the Ndonga recordings and grammars are pure Ndonga forms, and when confronted with Ndonga sentences and asked to change them to Kwambi they insert the forms used in the Kwambi literature instead. Informant P, when confronted with the changes made by the Kwambi informants, said that the forms inserted are non-Ndonga, as expected.

There is then a considerably smaller set of various negative concords in Kwambi than in Ndonga. In Kwambi the same concords are used for the subjunctive negative as for the habitual negative (see 5.5). Furthermore, most of these forms are identical to the negative concords found with the so-called defective verbs. Only with noun classes 1, 2, 6, 12 and 16 is there a difference. For these classes the defective

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<sup>16</sup> The term 'defective verbs' is a bit unfortunate, since it easily gives the impression that these verbs are pure irregularities. It misses the common factor that they are all stative in meaning, which sets them apart from the verbs that form their present tense with the "normal" concords such as *otandi*, *oto* etc., which are generally dynamic action verbs.



verbs have concords ending with ‘-e’ (*omumati ke na...*, *omafuma kage chi...* etc.),<sup>17</sup> whereas these forms ending with ‘e’ are ungrammatical when used for the habitual negative and the subjunctive negative, except in certain contexts (the same contexts that induce a change from ‘-a’ to ‘-e’ in other concords in both Ndonga and Kwambi).

Furthermore, there are no distinct participial negative concords in Kwambi, but the normal concords are used in participial clauses.

## 6. TONE:

The tonology of the Bantu languages is generally a highly complex issue. According to Baucom (1972:53) differences in tone are often mentioned by Wambo speakers as the main differences between the dialects. In my view, the topic of tone would be best treated by a native speaker with linguistic training, a task that is still waiting for its man (or woman).

## 7. SYNTAX:

Syntactically the Oshiwambo dialects are extremely similar, according to Baucom (1972:54). That statement is probably correct regarding Kwambi vs. Ndonga as well, no syntactic differences are known to me. The material used for the present study could probably be considered comprehensive enough for some kind of text-frequency count of syntactic strategies, but there have been no hypotheses to test, and no syntactic differences are immediately apparent when reading through the transcripts. Comparing the Kwambi books with Ndonga texts would not necessarily give sound conclusions, since the Kwambi written material that exists was produced by a small group of people, and the frequency of certain syntactic strategies may be influenced by the style of the individual translators.

## 8. VOCABULARY:

### 8.1. Introductory remarks:

Note that when a word is referred to as a “Kwambi word” in this section it does not necessarily mean that it is unique to the Kwambi dialect. It is only to denote that it is used in Kwambi but not in Ndonga. It might be found in other dialects, like for example *ochimbare* and *embare*, which are found in Kwanyama in the form of *oshimbale* and *embale* respectively. The same applies to the term “Ndonga word”.

I have not considered cases where two synonyms exist in both dialects, with one of the two synonyms being preferred in one dialect and the other one in the other dialect. Instead I have tried to only include cases where 1) the dialects use exclusive forms, i.e. one word is used in one of the dialects but never in the other one, which instead has a word which is never used in the first one, or 2) cases where we find two synonyms, but one of the dialects, either Kwambi or Ndonga, never uses one of the synonyms.

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<sup>17</sup> The concord forms ending with ‘-e’ are optional for class 2 and class 16, which also have the alternative forms *kaa* and *kapu* respectively.

## 8.2 The words:

One of the most striking features in a comparison of the Ndonga material and the Kwambi material is the high frequency of *ihe* (sometimes pronounced as *iyē*) in Ndonga, but the complete absence of it in all Kwambi material (and in colloquial Kwambi as I have encountered it). This is a non-lexical word which can probably be called a conjunction, the meaning being similar to ‘but’, and sometimes ‘consequently’.

With regard to another conjunction, *ngeno*, we instead find complete absence of it in the Ndonga material, but a relatively high frequency of it in Kwambi (although not as high frequency as that of *ihe* in Ndonga). This non-lexical word has several uses, but one of the uses is to indicate what we can call *counter-factive*. For example, “*Ngeno okwaa ompango inahi tya: “Ino aruka”, ando ngaye inandi chiwa okaaru*” (Romans 7:7) (=‘If the law had not said: “Do not covet” I would not have known desire’), i.e. if something *had been* the case, when it in fact is not. Ndonga seems to use *ando* instead in the counter-factive clauses. However, we should note that *ando* can also be found at several places in the spoken Kwambi corpus. It seems to be common to use *ngeno* in the counter-factive clause and then *ando* in the consequential clause, at least in the written Kwambi material. In Wisskirchen (1935:43) the example uses *ngeno* in both clauses, which would then be similar to what we find in Kwanyama, but I have not met this. It seems to be more common to have *ando* introducing the consequential clause. In the literature different options are found. In addition to *ngeno-ando* we can find for instance cases like “*Ngeno kwaa orutu arushē rwa ninga esho, nenu okuuva okwa kara peni?*” (1 Corinthians 12:17) (=‘If the whole body were an eye where would then hearing be?’). In the spoken material there is no clear case of a counter-factive clause followed by a consequential clause. If the strategy with *ngeno* in both clauses exists in Kwambi, then at least it cannot be the only one.

Then there are some other conjunctions found frequently in Ndonga which are practically absent from the Kwambi material, spoken as well as written. *Nkene/nkee*, *onkene/onkee* and *e* (meanings of conjunctions like these are difficult to translate with a single English gloss, and the reader is directed to Ndonga texts to see how they are used, but for *e* the translation ‘and’ would probably be adequate). One of the younger and more urban speakers has one instance of *nkee* and one *nkene*, and the same speaker may have one instance of the conjunction *e* (if so, then it is the only case of *e* in the Kwambi material). One other speaker uses *onkee* once. Informant E says that all four words *nkene*, *onkene*, *nkee* and *onkee* are Ndonga, and there is no doubt that *e* is a Ndonga word. Informant V agrees that *nkene* and *onkene* are Ndonga forms, but believes that *nkee* and *onkee* can be used in Kwambi.

Whereas it seems clear that Kwambis tend to use *ndere* to fill the gap left by the absence of *ihe* (in the sense ‘but’), it is not quite as clear what words are used to replace the other Ndonga conjunctions. No conclusion has been reached on this point in the present study.

If we turn to the demonstratives we can note that Baucom (1972:61) gives the impression that the demonstratives in Ndonga and Kwambi are radically different. In fact his Kwambi chart is full of errors. The only difference (except the absence of *nkuka*, *nkoka* etc. in Kwambi, see below) that is supported by my material and the Kwambi books is the fact mentioned above that those demonstratives starting with a dental fricative [ð] in Kwambi often have a nasal preceding them in Ndonga (for

example *dhika/ndhika, dhono/ndhono*).<sup>18</sup> The demonstrative *nkuka* (with its corresponding *nkoka* etc.), which can be found in Ndonga in variation with *huka*, is not found in Kwambi. Similarly, as demonstrative for class 12 *nkaka* can be found in Ndonga as an alternative to *haka*, but no instance of this has been encountered in Kwambi, where we only find *haka* etc. However, we should note that in the **spoken** Ndonga material the forms with initial *nk-* are absent, although found at several places in the written Ndonga material. What we are seeing here is probably a shift from the *nk-*forms to the *h-*forms, a shift which has already taken place in historical times in Kwambi.

The first person and second person singular pronouns in Kwambi are *ngaye* and *ngweye* respectively. In Ndonga these pronouns are used as well, which can be seen in Tirronen&Dammann (1975) as well as in the Ndonga narratives, but *ngame* and *ngoye* are alternatives in this dialect, and these are the only forms seen in modern Ndonga writing. However, *ngame* is unusual in my spoken Ndonga material. The difference *ngaye* vs. *ngame* is primarily a difference between Kwambi and **written** Ndonga, and the difference between Kwambi and **spoken** Ndonga in this regard is not as significant.

In Kwambi the first person plural pronoun is not pronounced with an affricate as in Ndonga *tse*, but as *se*. Occasional instances of what sounds like *se* in the spoken Ndonga material could be the result of quick and relaxed pronunciation.

In the Kwambi literature the verb *pwaakena* is used instead of Ndonga *pulakena* (=‘listen’), and it is also the only form encountered in the spoken Kwambi material. In the Ndonga material we only find *pulakena*.

The most common word for ‘sit’ in the Kwambi narratives is *kiitumba*, a form seemingly unknown in Ndonga. However, *kaatumba* is the form used in the Kwambi literature and in some cases in the spoken material, this being a form encountered in Ndonga (at least in Tirronen (1986) and one of the Ndonga recordings), but the lack of *kuutumba* in the Kwambi material should be noted. *Kuutumba* is the most common Ndonga form, being used in all instances in the Ndonga material except one *kaatumba* found in the spoken material, but *kuutumba* is used only once in the spoken Kwambi corpus. According to informant V all three words have been used in Kwambi traditionally, but only *kaatumba* and *kuutumba* in Ndonga. Informant E also says that all three forms are used in Kwambi. A fact which gives some support to V’s and E’s claim that *kuutumba* has been used in Kwambi even before the time of modern Ndonga influence is that the one speaker who uses it in the Kwambi recordings is the oldest speaker of all, and she has been living in Uukwambi all her life. Although there is some evidence that *kaatumba* has been used in Ndonga alongside *kuutumba*, the Ndonga informant, informant P, is reluctant to accept it as a form used in Ndonga.

The word for ‘now’ in the Kwambi books is *ngashingiika*<sup>19</sup>, to be compared with the cognate Ndonga *ngashingeyi*. As a contrast, the word *paife* is very common in present-day Oshakati and surroundings, even among speakers from a Kwambi background. In the recorded material *ngashingii*, with the alternative forms *ngashingiika* and *ngashingiino*, occur in more than half of the cases where people are using a word for ‘now’, but there is also a surprising amount of *paife*. In spite of the fact that even some of the old people in rural Uukwambi use *paife* there can be little doubt that this is a Kwanyama word originally. One of the Kwambi speakers using

<sup>18</sup> In the authentic spoken language of the Ndonga recordings it is sometimes difficult or impossible to hear this initial nasal sound, but I assume that this is because of less than perfect sound quality combined with rapid and relaxed speech.

<sup>19</sup> With the occasional *ngashingiino* to be found as well.

*paife* a few times notes himself that it is a Kwanyama word but that he likes using it anyway. Furthermore, the existence of the sequence ‘ai’ [aj] in this word makes it stand out against all other Kwambi (and Ndonga) words, and this further indicates its origin (in those Kwambi and Ndonga words where we find this sequence the semivowel is syllable-initial in the syllable following the one which ends with [a]). One single instance of *paife* is found in the Ndonga material.

In spoken Ndonga a form *ngayingeyi* is also commonly used for ‘now’. All Ndonga speakers in the material use it to a greater or lesser extent, except for some of those who contributed very short recordings. One Kwambi speaker uses it twice, but this is clearly because of interaction with a Ndonga speaker present at the time of the recording. No such substitution of ‘y’ for ‘sh’ has been found in Kwambi.

Also note that at least some Kwambi speakers have a tendency to add an initial *na-* to the words for now, giving us *nangashingii*, *nangashingiino* etc.

The difference in the words for ‘like this’ is obviously related to the contrast *ngashingii-ngashingeyi*. Kwambi uses *ngii/ngiino/ngiika* whereas Ndonga uses *ngeyi*.

If we turn our attention to words for ‘good’ and ‘bad’ we find that in the written Kwambi material the forms below are used in most cases:

1 omuhanawa/omuhineyi	2 aahanawa/aahineyi
3 omuhanawa/omuhineyi	4 eemhanawa/eemhineyi
5 ehanawa/ehineyi	6 omaanawa/omiineyi,omiineyi
7 ochaanawa/ochihineyi,ochineyi	8 iihanawa/iihineyi
9 ombwanawa/ombwineyi	10 eembwanawa/eembwineyi
11 orwaanawa / orwineyi	12 - / -
14 (and as nouns meaning ‘goodness’ and ‘badness’ respectively) uuhanawa/uuhineyi	
15 - / okuuhineyi	

In addition to those there are also some cases of words for ‘bad’ having *-wineyi* instead of *-hineyi* (*uuwineyi*, *aawineyi*, *okwiineyi* etc.) and words for ‘good’ having *-wanawa* instead of *-hanawa* in a few of the books of the New Testament.<sup>20</sup>

Several of the forms in the chart also occur in the spoken material. One speaker uses *uuhineyi* a few times for instance. The antonym *uuhanawa* occurs for two speakers in my spoken material, but only *uuwanawa* is found in the speech of two other speakers (in spite of the fact that the speakers in question are quite old), and in the other narratives this word is absent altogether. The forms *ombwineyi* and *omahanawa* are used by one speaker, and another one uses *omaaanawa*. Yet another speaker uses *omiineyi* (for noun class 6), *iihineyi* and *omuhineyi*. Two cases of what we might call ‘hybrid forms’ occur in the spoken material: 1) *ewineyi*, used by three different speakers, which seems to be a hybrid form, a mixture of *ehineyi* from the chart above and Ndonga *ewinayi*, and 2) in the speech of another speaker *uuhinayi*, i.e. a mixture of *uuhineyi* and the form found in written Ndonga: *uuwinayi*.<sup>21</sup>

However, there are also a number of instances of the forms used in Ndonga, and it seems to be difficult to find speakers who consistently use the forms used in the Catholic literature. At this point in time it might be difficult to establish whether the forms used in the literature were the only ones used in Kwambi in older times, or

<sup>20</sup> *Orwineyi* for noun class 11 is also taken from one of those books where *-wineyi* is used more than *-hineyi*. Perhaps *oruhineyi* would be used if noun class 11 appeared in the other books.

<sup>21</sup> Although only forms with *-neyi* occur in the main text in the Kwambi translation of the New Testament, as well as in all the other Kwambi books investigated, this form *uuhinayi* actually occurs in one footnote in “Etestamente Epe”.

whether the use of the Ndonga forms even by some old Kwambis should be interpreted as indicating that they have existed as alternatives even in the past. Informant V suggests that the forms like *uuwinayi* is due to Ndonga influence, but that all the three remaining alternatives for ‘bad’ have been used in traditional Kwambi (e.g. *uuhinayi*, *uuhineyi* and *uuwineyi*). He further states that *uuwanawa* as well as *uuhanawa* have been used, and *ombwinayi* as well as *ombwineyi*. However, informant E believes that all forms have been used in Kwambi even in traditional times. Informant P dismisses as non-Ndonga forms the words with ‘h’ (*uuhanawa*, *uuhinayi* etc.) and the words for ‘bad’ having *-neyi* instead of *-naye*. However, we may note that there seem to be a few cases of words for ‘bad’ having *-neyi* in the spoken Ndonga material and Katrina Nangombe is aware of the use of the forms with *-neyi*, such as for example *ombwineyi*, in Ndonga, although rare. This could of course possibly be because of Kwambi influence. In the spoken Ndonga material we also find some contracted forms similar to the ones in Kwambi, at least for noun classes 6 and 7 (*omiinayi*, *omaaanawa*, *oshaanawa*).

There are corresponding short forms of these evaluative words, *nawa* and *neyi/naye*, which can be used as adverbs. In the Kwambi literature only *neyi* is found, whereas *naye* is the form found in Ndonga. However, there are only a few instances of this word in the spoken Kwambi material, and there we only find *naye*. Whether this is because of Ndonga influence is not known. In any case the form *neyi* for this adverb seems to be almost extinct among younger speakers in Uukwambi.

It is then difficult to reach a firm conclusion as to what the situation has been like before the modern interaction between speakers of various dialects. What is clear is that forms with ‘h’, such as *uuhineyi*, *uuhinayi* and *uuhanawa*, are Kwambi forms. If bad-forms with *-neyi* existed at all in traditional Ndonga they must have been rare.

In some of the Kwambi narratives *kekama* (=shiver, tremble) is found, which is also the word used in the Kwambi literature, to be contrasted with Ndonga *kakama*. One Kwambi speaker has two instances of *kakama* and two instances of *kekama*. As a parallel to this word-initial *ke-* vs. *ka-* the word for ‘try’ in Ndonga is *kambadhala*, but in the Kwambi literature it is *kembadhara*. However, one speaker in the spoken Kwambi corpus who uses this word uses *kambadhara* - with *ka-* - consistently, and the only other person using the verb uses the form *kombadhara* consistently. This of course makes it less likely that the form with *ka-* is a non-Kwambi form. Indeed, informant V claims that both *kambadhara* and *kembadhara* can be used in Kwambi, but only *kambadhala* in Ndonga. He also claims that *kakama* is Ndonga as opposed to the Kwambi *kekama*. Informant E is of the same opinion as V, at least regarding Kwambi, and he says that all three forms for ‘try’ - *kambadhara*, *kombadhara* (rarely), and *kembadhara* - have been in use in Kwambi, whereas *kakama* for ‘shiver’ is Ndonga, *kekama* being the only form in Kwambi traditionally. Informant P agrees, only *kakama* and *kambadhala* would be used in Ndonga.

The Ndonga word *aniwa* (many times meaning something like ‘apparently’) is not found in the Kwambi material, where instead *anuwa* is used at all times. Furthermore, I cannot recall ever having heard anything other than *anuwa* in Uukwambi. Both *aniwa* and *anuwa* can be found in Ndonga. *Aniwa* seems to be the preferred form in written Ndonga, but it is very rare in the spoken material, only one instance. This seems to be a case similar to that of first person singular pronouns, where the difference between spoken Kwambi and **spoken** Ndonga is not very significant (unless *aniwa* and *ngame* are more common in parts of Ndonga not represented in my corpus).

In the literature *manka* is used consistently instead of the normal Ndonga (*o*)*manga* (many times these words can be translated as ‘while’). In the spoken material three of the oldest speakers use only this *manka* [maŋka], not (*o*)*manga*. (*O*)*manga* is found in six of the other narratives, most of these speakers being a bit younger than the ones using *manka* consistently, but at least two of these six speakers also use *manka* as an alternative. Two of the speakers using *manga* alternate between this form and a form *maha* (with the same meaning). *Maha* is not found in the Ndonga dictionaries. It is known by Johanna Nakambonde and it could be a less common Kwambi form (but it is possible that it is used once by one Ndonga speaker, although the section is spoken very quickly and is not clearly audible).<sup>22</sup> In three other Kwambi narratives there is a form *maa*, which is probably a more relaxed way of pronouncing *maha*. Informant V claims that *manka* is the old Kwambi word and that *manga*, to the extent that it occurs, is due to outside influence. Informant E believes that all the forms have been in use in traditional Kwambi, even *manga*. But whereas there are some reasons to believe that *manga* might not be a form traditionally used in Kwambi, it is less likely that *manka* has been absent from Ndonga. *Manka* is used consistently by one Ndonga speaker and is included in Tirronen (1986), although the reader is there directed to *manga* for an explanation of the word. However, informant P believes that (*o*)*manga* is the “real” Ndonga word, and he is surprised to hear that one of the old rural Ndonga speakers in the material uses *manka* consistently.

There is a game involving small holes in the ground and pebbles. This is called *uuholo* in Ndonga but *oshoro* in Kwambi. It is mentioned several times in the written Ndonga material (there as *uuholo*), and twice in the Kwambi recordings (there as *oshoro*).

Two words using the stem *-mbare* and used frequently in Kwambi seem to be absent from Ndonga. It is the word *embare* (=‘hat’), found a few times in the Kwambi material and heard many times by me, and 2) *ochimbare* (a kind of traditional basket) which is found in both the Kwambi literature and several spoken narratives. Regarding 1) compare Ndonga *egala*, and for 2) compare Ndonga *ontungwa*, words which are not used in the Kwambi material, but are the only ones found in the dictionaries and the Ndonga material.

The word for ‘who’ normally used in Kwambi has the liquid phoneme, giving us *ore* [ɔrɛ] or *ole* [ɔlɛ] for Ndonga *olye* [ɔlɛ]. *Ore* is the form used throughout the Kwambi literature and I have heard *ore* used many times in spoken language as well. In the spoken material we find the inflected forms *hale* (=‘of who?’) and *kule* (=‘by who?’). There is also a plural form *oore* (found for instance throughout the Kwambi literature) corresponding to Ndonga *oolye*.

If we turn our attention to words for ‘write’ there is only one speaker using *nyola* in the Kwambi material, but many cases of *changa*, which is an indication that *nyola* is a Ndonga word not traditionally used in Kwambi in the sense ‘write’. My experience is also that *nyola* would be very rare in rural Uukwambi. On the other hand *changa* is not an exclusively Kwambi word, but can be found in Ndonga as well, in the form *shanga*. Informant V believes that *changa* is the Kwambi word, and that *nyola* would be because of outside influence, whereas Ndonga uses both *shanga* and *nyola*. Interestingly, he himself is the one speaker from the Kwambi material who uses *nyola* in the sense ‘write’. Informant E on the other hand believes that *nyola* has been used in the sense ‘write’ even in old times. We should note that one speaker in

<sup>22</sup> For the diachronic change [ŋk] > [h] see also the discussion above concerning the demonstratives *nkuka*, *nkaka* etc.

the spoken Kwambi material uses the word in the sense ‘engrave’, and the word has probably existed in traditional Kwambi (and Ndonga, see Tirronen (1986)) with this particular meaning, so that the difference between the dialects would rather be the development of a wider meaning for this word in Ndonga. Informant V agrees that *nyola* has been used in Kwambi with this meaning ‘engrave’. In a modern society writing is talked about much more frequently than engraving, of course, which easily could lead to the impression that the word is a Ndonga word not used in Kwambi.

The expression used for spitting saliva in the Kwambi material is *siile/siyile omate*, where *siile* and *siyile* are derived from *siya* using the applicative suffix. Neither the verb in question nor the word *omate* is included in the dictionaries, where instead *hiya* and *eyeye* and *omayeye* are found. The Ndonga speaker in the spoken material who talks about spitting indeed uses *omayeye* and a form of the verb *hiya*, and another speaker who mentions saliva also uses *omayeye*. *Omayeye* is absent from the Kwambi material, but the other word mentioned by Tirronen, *eyeye*, is found in one of the Kwambi recordings. Informants V and E say that all three can be used in Kwambi but there is of course a difference in that when talking about spitting the verb *hiya* is used in Ndonga but *siya* in Kwambi. Johanna Nakambonde points out that even when using *eyeye* or *omayeye* a Kwambi person would use the verb *siya* when talking about spitting. Informant P states that *omate* is not a word used in Ndonga.

The only word used for ‘granary’ or ‘corn bin’ in the Kwambi material (written and spoken) is *eshisha*. In the Ndonga-English dictionaries both *eshisha* and *oshigandhi* can be found, and the speaker talking about granaries in the spoken Ndonga material is indeed alternating, using both, with *oshigandhi* more frequent. *Eshisha* is however absent from the English-Ndonga dictionary (1996), and in Tirronen (1986) the reader is directed to *oshigandhi* for an explanation, which are further indications of its low frequency in Ndonga. Another Ndonga speaker mentions *okagandhi*, a diminutive form of *oshigandhi*. The two Kwambi informants V and E both say that *oshigandhi* is pure Ndonga. Informant P says that both words can be used nowadays in Ndonga, but in the old days the old people would only use *oshigandhi*.

The word *wapa* (=‘be able’), which can be found several times in the Ndonga material, is absent from the Kwambi material (although only a small part of the Kwambi literature was checked for it since this difference between the dialects came to my attention at a late stage). Informant E and informant V agree that it is a pure Ndonga word.

There is a set of words which Fivaz calls quantitatives, and his list on page 61 gives a group of words meaning ‘only, alone’ which are sensitive to the noun class of the noun they modify (*alike, aguke* etc.). These words can indeed be found in the Ndonga material. Most of them are used one or a few times somewhere in the spoken material, and all four speakers in the main part of the material use them to a greater or lesser extent. In the Kwambi material there is a notable absence of them. Instead the non-inflected form *ike*, insensitive to noun class, is used throughout. This *ike* is found only once in the Ndonga material (it is in the speech of the Olukonda speaker), and is absent from the dictionaries. There are a few instances of *ashike* in the speech of three Kwambi speakers, and one instance in the speech of three others, but there are at least two factors that indicate that they are probably there because of outside influence. Firstly they don’t have the form *achike*, with an affricate, which would be expected if it was a Kwambi word (parallel to *achishe* etc.). Secondly, the three speakers using it more than once are the youngest and most urban of the recorded Kwambis. It deserves

to be mentioned that they use this word not as an attribute to a noun from class 7, but rather as an adverb (a use that is also found in Ndonga).

A traditional Owambo homestead has a section called *oshinyanga* in Ndonga, but this would always be referred to as *ochoto* in Kwambi. *Oshinyanga* is absent from Kwambi according to informant E and V (and according to my own experience). Informant P agrees that there is no word *oshoto* in Ndonga corresponding to *ochoto*, only *oshinyanga* is used. The material confirms the informants' views: the Ndonga speaker talking about traditional homesteads and their various parts uses *oshinyanga* consistently and the Kwambi speaker uses *ochoto* when referring to this feature. A few cases of *ochoto* can also be found in the Kwambi literature.<sup>23</sup>

The word *tuumba* is frequent in both spoken and written Kwambi, and it corresponds to Ndonga *taamba*. Basically it means to receive, to take when something is given to you. In the Kwambi literature *tuumba* is also used for accepting the Christian faith (e.g. “*Mba ya tuumba eehapu dhe, oya chachwa*” (Acts 2:41)), and for becoming pregnant. *Tuumba* and *taamba* seem to be exclusive forms, that is what informants V and E say, even though there is one case of *taamba* in the spoken Kwambi material. Ndonga speakers would not say *tuumba* according to informant P.

In the case of the Kwambi word *asha* (=‘shoot’), corresponding to Ndonga *yaha*, there is not only the regular correspondence ʃ-x (see section 4.3.), but also a lack of initial ‘y-’ in Kwambi. The correspondence is clear, with no cases of the Kwambi word in the Ndonga material and vice versa. Similarly, there is a word-pair *otha-yotha* (=‘grill, roast’).

One old Kwambi woman in the spoken material uses the word *aahedhenge* (there translated as ‘sluggards’). This word *omuhedhenge* is included in Tirronen’s dictionary but it is explicitly said to be a Kwambi word, and the reader is referred to the word *omukatalume* for an explanation. Indeed, there is a Ndonga speaker using the word *omukatalume* instead of *omuhedhenge*, confirming Tirronen’s claim that *omuhedhenge* is Kwambi. In the rudimentary translation of this Ndonga narrative made by the History Research Project at UNAM the word has been translated as ‘coward’ rather than ‘sluggard’, and both *omuhedhenge* and *omukatalume* seem to have a more general meaning than the English words ‘sluggard’ and ‘coward’. Perhaps ‘useless person’ is a better way to sum up the meaning of these synonyms. We can find the diminutive form *okakatalume* in one of the Kwambi narratives, and informant E says that both can be used in Kwambi. Informant P says that *omuhedhenge* is originally a Kwambi word. According to informant V *omukatalume* is a Ndonga word not traditionally used in Kwambi.

The word for ‘wash’ is *kosha* in Kwambi, *yoga* is not used in this sense. *Yoga* exists in Kwambi but means only ‘to swim’. As a contrast, *yoga* in Ndonga can mean both, hence also a contrast between Kwambi *ikosha* (=‘wash oneself’) and Ndonga *iyoga* (meaning the same thing), and in the written Kwambi material we find the noun *ekosho* (=‘washing’). There is no word *kosha* or *koha* in Ndonga.

The word *chiwa* occurs many times in the Kwambi material, and corresponds to Ndonga *tseya*. In the spoken Kwambi material there are also many instances of the alternative form *chuwa*. There are words derived from *chiwa* and *tseya*, which gives us a whole set of word-pairs: *chiwika* vs. *tseyika*, *chiwitha* vs. *tseyitha*, *chiwithira* vs. *tseyithila* etc. *Tseya* and the forms derived from it are completely absent from the

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<sup>23</sup> It might seem odd to use this word in the description of events taking place in Palestine in biblical times, but it is used there referring to a section of the building where Jesus was interrogated in connection with the events that led to his crucifixion.



Kwambi material, but it seems that *shiwa* and forms derived from it can be found in Ndonga, although much less common than *tseye* etc. *Shiwike*<sup>24</sup> is found in Tirronen (1986) (and in contrast to *omuhedhenge* it is not noted as a Kwambi word), and it is used a few times in the spoken Ndonga material. *Shiwa* is used once in the spoken Ndonga material, and although this *shiwa* is absent from the dictionaries it may have been used in Ndonga, at least at some stage, since *shiwike* (which is included in Tirronen (1986) as well as in Viljoen, Amakali & Namuandi) must be a derivation of it. However, informant P rejects *shiwa* (but says that *shiwika/shiwike* may occur, although *tseyika* is the normal word). He believes that if it occurs in the speech of modern Ndongas it is a result of outside influence.

The word for ‘become healed’ and ‘get well’ is *eruka* in the Kwambi literature and those two Kwambi narratives where the word is used. The Ndonga form seems to be *aluka*. The situation can be a bit confusing, since there is a verb *aruka* in Kwambi, but it means something like ‘suddenly’ (that is the translation chosen in my transcripts).<sup>25</sup> The related Kwambi word *erudha* means ‘to heal someone’, but Tirronen (1986) only includes *aludha*, a form which has not been encountered by me in Kwambi. Informant E agrees that *aluka* and *aludha* are Ndonga forms, whereas *eruka* and *erudha* are Kwambi forms, and informant P has the same view. Somewhat surprisingly, informant V believes that *aruka* and *arudha* can be used in Kwambi, but I have never met them except in Ndonga.

In addition to words such as *adhika*, *monika*, *wetike*, which are found in Ndonga, we also find the forms *adhikwa*, *monikwa* and *wetikwe* in the spoken and the written Kwambi material, having the same meaning, and in the written material *tarikwa* and *pandikwa* as well (corresponding to *talika* and *pandika* from the Ndonga dictionaries). *Tondikwa/tondikwe* (‘=be hated’) is also used in both the spoken and written Kwambi material. It seems that in Kwambi there has been a reinterpretation of at least some words having the so-called ‘neutral suffix’, with the addition of a passive suffix to make the form fit with the passive meaning of these words, so to speak. Two old Kwambi women even use the form *adhiwa* instead of *adhika* or *adhikwa*. In that case it seems that the passive suffix has replaced the neutral suffix instead of just being added to it. The forms with no passive suffix but only the neutral suffix also occur in Kwambi though, and they are not uncommon.

To what extent the addition of a passive morpheme after a neutral suffix occurs for other, less frequent words having the neutral suffix is not clear to me, but at least it seems clear that there is no form *\*rikwa* corresponding to *rika* (meaning ‘be eaten’). I have also not found *uvikwa* in the corpus, only *uvika*, even in the Kwambi material, although only parts of the written Kwambi material were checked for this feature. The speaker who says *tondikwe* in the spoken material uses *holike* for the antonym. Informant P does not know of the existence of forms such as *wetikwe*, *adhikwa* etc. in Ndonga, but it is interesting to note that Tirronen includes *wetiwe*, having the same meaning as *wetike*. The two Kwambi informants believe that *uvikwa*, *chiwikwa* and *horikwe* are also possible Kwambi forms even though they are absent from the corpus (informant E says that *horikwe* would be rare, though). They say that

<sup>24</sup> The existence of alternative forms *shiwike* and *shiwika* is probably not a dialect-related difference (although only *shiwike* occurs in the Ndonga material considered in this study), but is just a reflection of the fact that there are two options with this stative verb - it can be used as either a ‘defective verb’ or a verb which forms present tense with past tense concords (like *tira*, *nyanyukwa* etc.).

<sup>25</sup> To make matters worse *aluka* in Kwanyama means ‘come back’ (corresponding to Kwambi *garuka* and Ndonga *galuka*).

both the forms ending with *-wa/-we* and the ones with only the neutral suffix have been used in Kwambi.

Dammann mentions the word *epasha/epaha* as a word which has additional meanings in Kwambi. The meaning common to both dialects is ‘birth of twins’. This is the translation found in Tirronen (1986). Dammann found that in Kwambi the word can be used in the general sense ‘something abnormal at birth’. Informant V, who is a Kwambi, is aware of a use of the word to describe a case where a baby’s feet come out first at birth (apparently because then it can be regarded as a twin, a “single twin”). The Ndonga informant P is not aware of the extended meaning of the word. These facts support Dammann’s claim, of course, although we may also note that the Kwambi informant E is also not aware of any other meaning than birth of twins, like informant P.

Referring to an axe Kwambis say *ekuwa* where Ndongas say *ekuya*, even though there are no instances of this word in the spoken Kwambi material. I have only heard *ekuwa* in Uukwambi, and in the written Kwambi material there are a few instances of *ekuwa*, but no *ekuya*. Informants V, E and P all agree with this hypothesis. Two of the recorded Ndonga speakers talk about axes, using *ekuya*. One of them uses the word many times on the tape, only using the form *ekuya* in spite of the fact that the Kwaluudhi interviewer is using the form *ekuwa* consistently in his interaction with the Ndonga speaker. Furthermore, *ekuwa* is not included in the dictionaries. In the written Ndonga material we find the word *okakuya* (=‘small axe’).

There are also some further parallels to the pair *ekuwa-ekuya*. The word for ‘fool’ in Tirronen’s dictionaries<sup>26</sup> is *omugoya*, and the word for brain is *uuluyi*. In the Kwambi literature all uses of the former word and its derivatives have *-gowa*, i.e. [w] instead of [j], just as in the case of *ekuwa-ekuya*. The speaker in the Kwambi corpus who uses this word may be using [w], but it is not pronounced clearly, which makes it difficult to be sure. This difficulty of telling the difference between [w] and [j] also occurs - for the same speaker - when she pronounces the word for ‘brain’. In the case of ‘brain’ the word seems to be lacking from the Kwambi literature, unfortunately. Johanna Nakambonde is aware of the forms *uuluwi* and *omugowa*. One of the Ndonga speakers recorded uses the word *uugoya* (=‘foolishness’) several times, never *uugowa*, and he also uses the word *aagoya*, and in the written Ndonga material we also find the same stem used with other prefixes as well, like *oshigoya* and *omugoya*. One other word to add to the list is the word for ‘sweet’. The stem for ‘sweet’ in the Kwambi literature is *-towe*, to be contrasted with *-toye* from the dictionaries and the written Ndonga material (it is absent from the spoken Ndonga material). However, once again the only speaker in the **spoken** Kwambi corpus who uses the word pronounces the word quickly, and it is difficult to hear whether he is saying *etoye* or *etowe*.<sup>27</sup> I have also encountered other word-pairs: *yuwa-yuya*, *tyawa-tyaya*, *omuwe-omuye*, *omushuwa-omuhuya* and *tuwa-tuya*. Although the materials themselves are not always conclusive with regard to this feature, the informants confirm that the w-forms are Kwambi and the y-forms Ndonga. Fivaz (1986:47) includes *uuluwi* as an alternative to *uuluyi*, but this is the only indication I have found of use of any of these ‘w-forms’ in Ndonga.

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<sup>26</sup> The term “Tirronen’s dictionaries” is here used to refer to Tirronen (1986) and ELCIN Church Council Special Committees (1996), since the latter dictionary was based on Tirronen’s work.

<sup>27</sup> This problem of distinguishing between the two semivowels in authentic speech is surely the reason for the variation having arisen in the first place, no matter whether the forms with ‘y’ or the ones with ‘w’ are the original ones.

Although there are several word-pairs which show this correspondence Kwambi 'w' vs. Ndonga 'y' we must note that most words having 'w' in Kwambi also have 'w' in Ndonga, and the same goes for 'y'. That is why these words are discussed here instead of being brought up in section 4.3.

In a similar vein, there are some words where Kwambi 'h' corresponds to Ndonga 'y', which are also better treated here than in section 4.3, since they are few in comparison with the huge amount of words having 'h' and 'y' that are the same in both dialects.<sup>28</sup> Words where Kwambi 'h' corresponds to Ndonga 'y' are for instance *aahenda* vs. *aayenda*<sup>29</sup> (visitors, guests), *hina* vs. *yina* (his/her/their mother) and *ha* vs. *ya* (go).

In one of the narratives there is mentioning of eggs, and the word used for egg is *ehi* consistently, to be compared with Ndonga *ei* or *eyi* (the difference between the pronunciations [ei] and [eji] is of course minimal). The word for tooth is *ehego* in Kwambi (although the word is absent from the spoken Kwambi material), corresponding to Ndonga *eyego*.

In the Kwambi literature there is no mentioning of eggs, but many verbal nouns belonging to noun class 5 can be found, and there we find an 'h' inserted between the noun class prefix 'e-' and a stem starting with a vowel: *ehithano*, *ehoparo*, *ehuvitho* etc. Some of those are then other cases of the same correspondence Kwambi 'h' vs. Ndonga 0 (*eithano* etc.), although some of the words have an 'h' in Ndonga as well (*ehupitho*, *ehamberero* etc.) since these verb stems have an initial 'h-' in Ndonga (see section 4.7). In the spoken Kwambi material these verbal nouns from noun class 5 are not quite as common, but we do find the word *ehilongo* in one of the narratives (corresponding to Ndonga *eilongo*), *ehepitho* and *ehimbiro* (corresponding to Ndonga *eimbilo*). Informant P believes that this insertion of 'h' is a pure Kwambi phenomenon. The existence of these word-pairs is probably related to the phenomenon described in 4.7 above. The insertion of 'h' in Kwambi seems to be used in order to avoid vowels meeting, and the phenomenon also appears with other noun class prefixes, so that we get *aahenda* (already mentioned above, related to the verb *enda*), *aahimbi*, *aahokorori* etc., and also *uuhenda* and *iihendo*, as well as *iihimbo* (related to the verb *imba*). In the Kwambi literature we also find *iihimati* (= 'fruits'), contrasting with Ndonga *iiyimati*, but those speakers who use this word in the spoken Kwambi material pronounce it like *iimati* or *iiyimati*, with no audible 'h'.

If we look at the plural form of *ehego* we find that it has two versions. We can find the expected *omahego*, which contrasts with Ndonga *omayego* in the expected way 'h' vs. 'y', but in Kwambi we also find the form *omeego* (which seems to be more common). Similarly, in the Kwambi literature we find *omeepeko* (= 'torments'), plural of *ehepeko*. Informants E and V are aware of this form in addition to the alternative *omahepeko*. In Ndonga there is only *omahepeko* according to informant P. The list could be made longer. In the Kwambi literature there are cases similar to *omeepeko*, i.e. verbal nouns from class 6 (*omeehamo*, *omiimbiro* etc.), and *omeegere* (= 'clods of salt or sugar'), but most of these words occur only in the written material, and many of them are of course very unusual in everyday language use.

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<sup>28</sup> Strictly speaking, in most cases where Kwambi 'h' corresponds to Ndonga 'h' we are of course dealing with a sound correspondence Kwambi [h] vs. Ndonga [x].

<sup>29</sup> The plural *aahenda* has been chosen here rather than singular *omuhenda*. Although the singular form theoretically has this 'h-instead-of-y' phenomenon it seems that in authentic speech speakers rather pronounce the word *omweenda* [ɔmwɛ:nda], just like there are alternative versions without 'h' for *omuhimbi* (*omwiimbi*), *omuhedhenge* (*omweedhenge*) etc. The word *uuhenda* (= 'visit') can be found in one of the Kwambi narratives.

The words mentioned above are part of a wider phenomenon, where Kwambi is different from Ndonga because of the way the noun class 6 forms are contracted. In Kwambi we find words such as *omooka* (=‘gravy, sauce, soup’) and *omoodhi* (=‘tears’). These words and versions with ‘h’ in them (i.e. *omahoka* and *omahodhi*) have all been used in Kwambi, according to informant E. Informant V agrees in principle, but cannot remember hearing *omahoka* in Kwambi, only *omooka*. In the Kwambi narratives we find *omooka*, *omiimbo* and *omahodhi*, and in the literature there is *omoodhi*. According to informant P the use of the contraction *omooka* as well as the other contractions are Kwambi phenomena.

The word for ‘arm’ can be *okwoko* in both dialects, and there is also a version *okooko*, especially in Kwambi. The form *okwaako* exists in Ndonga but seems to be absent from Kwambi, and both Kwambi informants reject it. The plural form has a contracted form in Ndonga as well as Kwambi, but the plural forms have different ways of contracting the vowel of the prefix and the stem-initial vowel. In the Ndonga material we only find *omaako* (spoken and written material), whereas the two speakers using the word in the Kwambi material say *omooko*, a form which is also used in the Kwambi books. In technical terms we are then dealing with a case where the Ndonga form has progressive assimilation whereas the assimilation in the Kwambi form is regressive. The Kwambi informants say that *omooko* or *omahoko* is what is used in Kwambi, with *omaako* being used only in Ndonga. Informant P agrees that *omaako* is the contraction found in Ndonga, and he also says that *omahoko* is Kwambi. There may also be occasional use of a non-contacted form *omaoko* in Ndonga. This form is found in Tirronen (1986) together with *omaako*. Somewhat surprisingly *omooko* is found in the Ndonga-English section of Viljoen, Amakali & Namuandi (1984).

In conclusion we can see that even though most words are the same in both dialects (if we ignore phonetic differences related to the sound correspondences mentioned in section 4.3.), there are numerous cases where Kwambi has a different word from Ndonga. In many cases it is a matter of cognates, i.e. variations in what is obviously the same word etymologically speaking (*kekama* vs. *kakama*, *ngashingii* vs. *ngashingeyi*, *ekuya* vs. *ekuya* etc.), but in some cases the words used are unrelated, such as for example *embare* vs. *egala* and *ochimbare* vs. *ontungwa*. In a few cases it seems that a word has a wider or different meaning in one of the dialects, but exists in both. This is true for at least *yoga*, but probably also for *epasha/epaha*, and perhaps also *nyola*.

### 8.3. Counting<sup>30</sup>

In the Kwambi literature the words for ‘6’, ‘7’ and ‘8’ are *kanekamwe*, *uunuwari* and *uunuuatatu* respectively. These words come from a way of counting fingers. They are

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<sup>30</sup> To a European it is quite surprising to find that the dialects until recently have had their own sets of simple numerals. Zimmerman & Hasheela (1998) mention that Kwanyama originally had its own numerals from 6 to 9, and only recently did the Oshikwanyama Language Committee decide to adopt the Ndonga words (which are easier to use in the instruction of arithmetic). In the Indo-European languages it is not only the case that dialects of the same language have the same numerals, but even distantly related branches on ‘the Indo-European tree’ tend to have numerals which have evolved out of the same proto-Indo-European forms. In the linguistic debate concerning which kinds of words are more likely to be borrowed and which are less likely to be borrowed this then serves as a reminder that numerals can certainly be borrowed, even though Europe is not a region where this has happened frequently (but note that the numerals borrowed from Ndonga into other dialects are only numerals that are higher than the number of fingers on a human hand, i.e. five).

contracted forms of *okanwe kamwe*, *uunwe uwaari* and *uunwe utatu* (literal translation ‘one small finger’, ‘two small fingers’, ‘three small fingers’). However, these words seem to be on their way to extinction. According to Michael Kamari, an old teacher at Okatana who was also involved in the writing of Catholic Kwambi literature, the words are still used today, and Johanna Nakambonde has heard old people using them, but personally I have not heard these old words being used except for occasional use in church and the occasion when one old speaker in one of the recordings of the spoken material used the non-contracted form of *uunuutatu*, i.e. *uunwe utatu*. The same speaker at another point used *hamano* for ‘6’ instead of *kanekamwe*.

At the time when these words for ‘6’, ‘7’ and ‘8’ were more frequent they were features distinguishing Kwambi from Ndonga, according to Michael Kamari. This is of course supported by the fact that the words are absent from all Ndonga material ever encountered by me, and informant P confirms that this way of counting “small fingers” has not been used in Ndonga for these numerals. The Ndonga words for ‘6’, ‘7’ and ‘8’ are *hamano*, *heyali* and *hetatu* respectively. In contrast to the old Kwambi words for ‘6’, ‘7’ and ‘8’ these words are sensitive to the noun class of the head noun (*aantu yahamano*, *omafuma gahamano* etc.).

The same problem arises as in the discussion of noun class 4 *emu-* vs. *omi-*, about how to interpret the fact that even old people with strong Kwambi speech tend to use the allegedly Ndonga words. The question is whether *hamano*, *heyali* and *hetatu* existed as alternatives in Kwambi even in traditional times or whether the use of them even by old Kwambi people reflects Ndonga influence. Informant V claims that they are a result of Ndonga influence. Informant E agrees that they might be because of Ndonga influence originally, but he points out that he remembers the use of *hamano*, *heyali* and *hetatu* in Kwambi even in his childhood.

When it comes to words for the number ‘4’ Wisskirchen states that Kwambi uses *ine* for noun classes 4 and 10, where Ndonga uses *ne*. Three speakers in the spoken Kwambi narratives use ‘4’ for these noun classes. In fact, two of the speakers actually contradict Wisskirchen’s claim in that they use *ne* a few times instead of *ine*. However, informant V agrees that *ne* would be Ndonga, and that an expression such as for instance ‘four dogs’ would normally be pronounced *eembwiine* in Kwambi, contraction of *eembwa ine*. I have heard *ne* used by some Kwambi speakers instead of *ine* (in for example *omulongo nane* for ‘14’), but apart from the cases in the spoken corpus all of them were young. Furthermore, the use of *ne* by the old speakers on the tapes follows a pattern, and it must be attributed to the fact that we are dealing with the expression representing the numeral ‘40’. Some younger Kwambis have pointed out to me that they could say for example *omikunda ine* (=‘four villages’) or *omulongo nine* (=‘14’), but would not use *ine* in the expression meaning ‘40’, i.e. always having *omilongo ne* instead of *omilongo ine* or *emulongo ine* (literally ‘four tens’). It may seem odd that expressions like these would behave differently than other expressions, but it may be because of the use of Ndonga in the teaching of Mathematics in schools. Higher numerals such as ‘40’ are more likely to first be encountered in a school situation.<sup>31</sup>

According to Wisskirchen Kwambi then uses *iine* for noun class 8, contrasting with Ndonga *ine* for this noun class. Surprisingly there are cases of *iine* for **noun class 10** in the Kwambi literature instead of *ine*. The vowel length is often very

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<sup>31</sup> But at least *omilongo ine* also occurs for some Kwambi speakers. *Emulongo ine* must be very rare in contemporary spoken Kwambi if it occurs at all.

difficult to hear in authentic spoken language, but it seems that there are at least some speakers who do not make any difference in vowel length, having *ine* for noun class 8 as well as classes 4 and 10.

In the word mentioned above in the expression for ‘seven’ - *uunwe uwaari* - we could also see the Kwambi word used for ‘two’ when the head noun is in noun class 14, i.e. *uwaari*. This also seems to be a difference between Kwambi and Ndonga, since the Ndonga grammars and dictionaries have *uyali* (but the word is not used in the Ndonga recordings). One speaker in the spoken Kwambi material may be saying *uyali*, but there is no doubt that *uwaari* is the normal Kwambi word.

## 9. VARIATION WITHIN THE DIALECTS

There is some imbalance in the spoken Kwambi corpus, in that most of the speakers are from the eastern part. Two old men are from the Elim area and have been living there for most of their life, and the radio recordings are recordings of a man hailing from Elim, but the others are from the east (although one woman in Okamure who contributed the longest recording was born and raised in Elim, but has been living in Okamure probably for more than 70 years). However, looking at the length of the recordings all three men from the Elim area (which is in central Uukwambi) contributed long recordings, so that the corpus becomes less imbalanced when we look at the actual number of minutes from the eastern part of Uukwambi vs. the central part. A more significant deficiency is the lack of speakers from the far western part.

When discussing variation within Kwambi I should mention that I have heard of only two differences. It was mentioned to me once by a Kwambi man that there may be some tonal differences. In his case he was referring to differences between the people of Okatana in the east and Elim further west. However, as was mentioned above, the present study is not concerned with the tonology of the dialect, and so the imbalance in question has not been seen as a problem in that respect. The second difference would be between the speech of the Kwambis recorded for the present study and those in the extreme west of Uukwambi. Apparently the people in the Onaanda area leave out the nasal sounds before voiced plosives<sup>32</sup>, which sets them apart not only from other Kwambis but also from the Ndonga speakers. Unfortunately no recording could be made in the Onaanda area.

No difference is apparent when comparing the speech of the Kwambis from the eastern part with those from the Elim area, except that all three speakers from the Elim area (and also the woman who grew up in Elim but moved to eastern Uukwambi when she got married) have a strong tendency to use the prefix *emu-* for noun class 4 (see section 5.1). They use *omi-* only in the plural of *omulongo* (‘10’), to make numerals such as ‘40’, ‘50’ etc. (for the special behaviour of numerals see section 8.3). This suggests that the co-existence of *omi-* and *emu-* for noun class 4 may be primarily a phenomenon found in the east, although some further research would be needed before a firm conclusion can be reached regarding this issue.

The Ndonga recordings are also not perfectly balanced geographically, and the topic of variation within Ndonga is a topic that needs further research. Within the large district of Ndonga there is probably more variation than within Uukwambi. The higher frequency of [l] further east has already been mentioned in section 4.1. A

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<sup>32</sup> Anecdotal evidence

more detailed study of Ndonga might result in the discovery of some isoglosses not coinciding with the traditional boundary between Ondonga and Uukwambi.

## 10. FINAL WORDS

A language is a complex phenomenon, and one can continue learning more about it infinitely, in principle. A study that aims at including everything separating two languages or language varieties must necessarily be incomplete, one cannot hope to catch every single word or phenomenon, and this becomes even clearer in the case when one is not a native speaker of the language. Some things which might have deserved a place in this discussion have probably been missed out.

Some interested readers may be wondering why something they thought was an exclusive Kwambi feature or an exclusive Ndonga feature was not included. Those readers may be right. Hopefully the corpus of spoken Kwambi and Ndonga can be used for further studies by someone else, as a way of testing other hypotheses about the differences between the two dialects, should such hypotheses come forward.

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