



Evidence from Retroflexion in Kizigua:

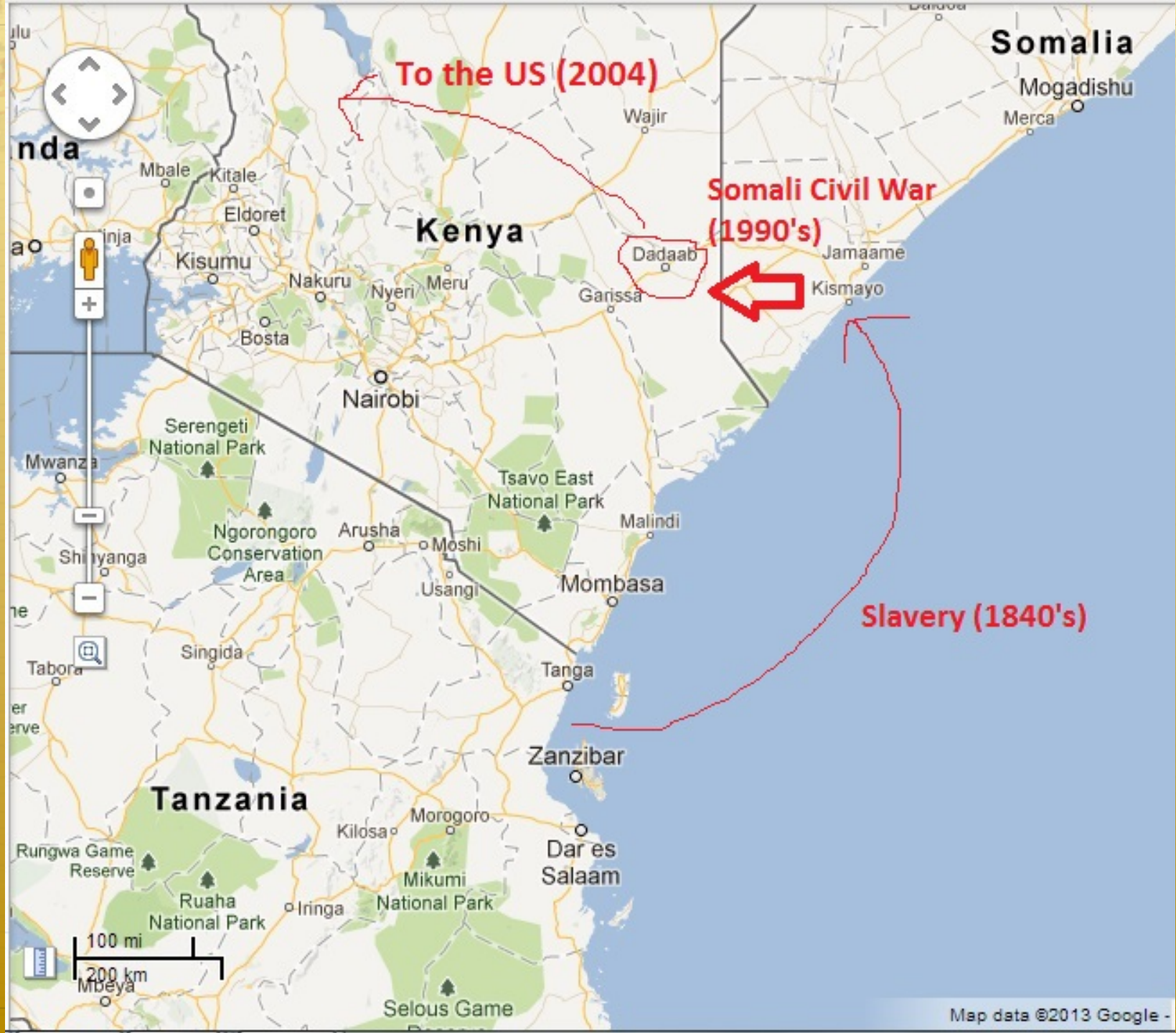
How Language Maintenance was Possible in the Context of
Forced Migration in Pre-Civil War Somalia

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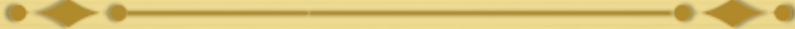
Kizigua



- ✧ An underdocumented language originally from Tanzania
- ✧ “Wazigua” is the ethnonym
- ✧ Part of the larger Bantu language family
 - ✧ One of the largest language families in Africa
 - ✧ Related to Swahili
- ✧ Focus of presentation on dialect spoken in Somalia



2 Migrations, 2 Outcomes



- ✧ 19th Century: Tanzania → Southern Somalia
 - ✧ Migration due to slavery
 - ✧ Maintenance first observed by Crevatin (1993) based on 1980's field work
 - ✧ Focus of current presentation
- ✧ 1990's: Somalia → Kenya → elsewhere including the US
 - ✧ Migration due to Somali Civil War
 - ✧ Youngest generation shifting to monolingualism in English

How was maintenance possible?



Two factors:

1. Coincidental contact with other Bantu Groups
 - ✧ Evidence found in presence of retroflex sounds
2. Relative isolation of Southern Somalia
 - ✧ Lack of contact with a more politically influential language

Data



✧ Historical

- ✧ Dictionary of Late 19th Century Tanzanian Kizigua (Kisbey 1906)
- ✧ Secondary sources discussing history of the region

✧ Linguistic

- ✧ Consultant work with present day speakers
- ✧ Began with 4-month long Field Methods course
- ✧ Continued by working with additional speakers in the community

Historical Context



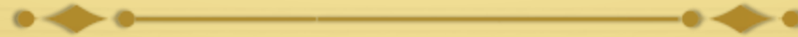
- ✧ Eno & Eno (2007)
 - ✧ Famine and drought as impetus for migration
 - ✧ Arab-Omani traders lured (“tricked”) Wazigua to Somalia
 - ✧ Worked as slaves in plantations
 - ✧ Heavy resistance
 - ✧ Over 20,000 slaves escaped on foot between 1865-1890
 - ✧ Formed fugitive slave communities including Gosha
 - ✧ Gosha became an independent state





Contact with Other Bantu Groups



- ✦ At the time of arrival in Gosha, contact with 2 major groups
 1. Groups already present in Southern Somalia
 - ✦ Bantu: Bajuni, Pokomo
 - ✦ Other: Oromo, Boni
 2. Other fugitive slaves
 - ✦ All Bantu: Shambara, Yao, Makua, Nyindo, Lima, Nyasa

Linguistic Evidence for Contact with Other Bantu Groups



Sound	Somali Kizigua Word		Tanzanian Kizigua	Gloss
t	matunda		matunda	‘fruit (pl)’
nt	wantu		wantu	‘people (pl)’
ɗ	maɗuɗu		madudu	‘bugs (pl)’
nd	ihundu		-nkundu	‘red’

- ✧ Retroflexion present in Somali Kizigua but not in Tanzanian Kizigua (Kisbey 1906, Mochiwa 2008)
- ✧ Pre-nasalized retroflex stops (/nt/, /nd/) focus of discussion

Development of Retroflex Sounds



- ✧ Since absent in both 19th Century and 21st Century Tanzanian Kizigua, most likely developed in Somalia
- ✧ Did they develop independently or due to contact with other languages that do have these sounds?
- ✧ If they developed independently, there would need to be phonetic motivation.

Research on Retroflexion



✧ Bhat (1973)

- ✧ Most thorough typological survey of retroflexion
- ✧ Examined 150 languages containing retroflex sounds
 - ✧ Found most to cluster in several geographical areas
- ✧ Concluded that most cases involved contact with another language that already has these sounds
- ✧ Very few phonetic environments leading to independent development
 1. Preceding a back vowel (/u/, /o/, /a/)
 2. Implosion (a typologically rare phonetic feature)

Possible sources of Retroflexion?

- ✧ Phonetic reasons identified by Bhat (1973) not applicable to /nɾ/ and /ndɾ/.
- ✧ So must be due to contact

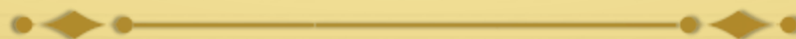
Language	Family	Pre-nasalized Retroflex Sounds	Source
Oromo	Cushitic	none	Gragg (1982)
Somali	Cushitic	none	Saeed (1999)
Northern Dialects of Swahili (Bajuni, Amu, etc)	Bantu	nd	Nurse (1985)
Pokomo	Bantu	nɾ, nd	Nurse (1985)

What does this mean?



- ✧ Since Bajuni, Pokomo, and other Northern Dialects of Swahili among the few language with pre-nasalized retroflex sounds, one of these language likely the source of pre-nasalized retroflex sounds in Somali Kizigua
- ✧ Presence of pre-nasalized retroflex sounds show evidence of contact with these Bantu groups
 - ✧ But, this is not an ordinary case of contact
 - ✧ It is contact with similar languages
 - ✧ Similarity crucial in contributing towards maintenance
 - ✧ But how so?

Corresponding Cognates



Tanzanian Kizigua	Bajuni	Somali Kizigua	Gloss
-nkundu	ekundu	ihundu	'red'
nkonde	honḍe	honḍe	'cultivated field'
kenda	kenḍa	cenḍa	'9'
nkunde	ukunde	uhunde	'bean'
tunda	cunḍa	tunḍa	'fruit' (sg.)

Possible Scenario?



- ✧ Adult speakers of Bajuni or Pokomo learning Kizigua may have pronounced Kizigua cognates with retroflex
 - ✧ Passed this pronunciation along to future generations
- ✧ Children born to both Wazigua and Bajuni or Pokomo parents adopted retroflex pronunciation of Kizigua words
 - ✧ Retroflex variant may have had important social meaning
- ✧ Contact with similar languages makes this type of change possible
 - ✧ Also makes it look like a systematic sound change

Other Fugitive Slaves

- ✧ Menkhaus (2003)
 - ✧ Most fugitive slave groups lost their native language
 - ✧ “unlike most of the East Africans sold into captivity in Somalia, the [Wazigua] were not children, but adults.”



What does this mean?



- ✦ Wazigua less likely to shift to other languages
- ✦ Children from other groups acquired Kizigua
- ✦ An overall increase in number of Kizigua speakers
- ✦ Ethnic and linguistic lines blurred for many present-day speakers
 - ✦ Example: One speaker interviewed has Wazigua ancestry on one side of the family and Makua ancestry on another. Kizigua still primary language
 - ✦ Interethnic marriage not uncommon
 - ✦ Nevertheless, Kizigua language maintained

Relative isolation



- ✧ Following the disestablishment of Gosha, European colonization (1894-1960) seems to have had little linguistic impact (except for a handful of loans from Italian and English)
- ✧ Southern Somalia relatively isolated from outside world
- ✧ Crevatin (1993) discusses isolation
 - ✧ Discovered many Kizigua speakers unfamiliar with Somali
 - ✧ Lack of loan words from Somali
 - ✧ Evidence of relative isolation up through the 1980's (more than a century after arrival in Somalia)

More recent situation



- ✦ Ethnic Somalis did not have political control of Wazigua territory until 1960.
- ✦ Younger speakers (born after ~1980) more likely to also speak Somali and to use Somali loan words when speaking Kizigua
- ✦ Current situation very different from late 19th / Early 20th Century

Summary



- ✧ Language maintenance possible for more than a century in Kizigua due to:
 - ✧ Contact with other Bantu languages
 - ✧ Similarity to Kizigua played a role in maintenance
 - ✧ Illustrated with the development of pre-nasalized retroflex sounds
 - ✧ Their typological unusualness makes them unlikely to have developed independently. Contact more likely.
 - ✧ The formation of Gosha made Kizigua a dominant language in the region before ethnic Somali control
 - ✧ Further contributed to maintenance by encouraging other Bantu groups to shift to Kizigua
- ✧ Relative isolation
 - ✧ Lack of a more politically influential language present in Southern Somalia.
 - ✧ Lack of another language to shift to.

Conclusion



- ✧ Migration is not new in human history, nor is language change in the context of migration. Yet, relatively little work on historical situations.
- ✧ Language maintenance in Late 19th and Early 20th Century Somali Kizigua a relatively unique historical case of language and migration with relatively unique findings
- ✧ Migration tied to slavery relatively well-studied in the New World, but outcome for Kizigua is very different
 - ✧ Maintenance rather than creolization or shift.
 - ✧ Somali Kizigua has developed typologically rare sound.
 - ✧ Increased in markedness?



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Asante! / Thank you!

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