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INFORMATION FOR CONTRIBUTORS

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Articles should be clearly typed in double-spacing. The present issue maintains the format in use for ALR vol. 9, but for future issues we shall be able to offer italic characters as well as roman and bold.

Any illustrative material, such as maps and diagrams, should be suitable for photographing as submitted and any sources duly acknowledged.

In matters of orthography, American spelling of English (center, program, etc.) will be respected, if the author so wishes. AL/LA is continuing the series of Studies devoted to S.W. Koelle's *Polyglotta Africana*, and contributors to this are asked particularly to note the spelling conventions governing citations from the *Polyglotta*, which first appeared in the *African Language Review*, 3, 1964, p. 58, and are reproduced above on p. 259, for the convenience of readers.

Each contribution should be accompanied by a summary of 150-300 words in length which will be translated into the other language to maintain the journal's bilingual character.

Authors should also provide brief details about themselves for the section of 'Notes on Contributors'.

Because of the methods of printing at present used, it is not possible to provide proofs for authors.

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Narrative Style and the Consecutive

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A consecutive construction may be roughly defined as a verbal form whose occurrence is largely restricted to descriptions of serial action. A fairly typical example from Swahili is the following:

1. Hamisi alikuwenda sokoni, akanumua nyama, akarudi nyumbani

Hamisi went to the market, bought meat, (and) returned home.

The verbs are underlined in the above example. In the first clause the normal past tense, an independent construction, is used. The verbs of the two subsequent clauses are examples of the Swahili consecutive.

Constructions such as these differ from other verbal constructions in being characteristic neither of wholly independent nor of subordinate clauses. They are typically found as alternatives to independent constructions in the second and subsequent members of a series of coordinate clauses, normally only where the actions involved are serial rather than simultaneous. Such forms, whether called consecutive, subsecutive, subjunctive, or narrative, are found in a large number of African languages. Their use, however, is by no means limited to Africa, nor is it common to all African languages. Similar specialization to use in consecutive position is found in constructions in a wide variety of languages; Kiparsky (1968) discusses the role of such constructions in older forms of Indo-European in some detail. Yet some languages, even in areas where this syntactic feature is common, show no differentiation within coordinate clauses.

Even languages which use consecutive constructions show considerable variation in form and usage. In some, the initial clause of a string describing serial action may contain a consecutive. In perhaps the majority, as in Swahili, the initial clause must normally contain a non-consecutive verb form. In some, consecutives may not be used when a change of subject occurs; in such cases a new string must be initiated. In others, as in Swahili, the consecutive string could in theory be indefinitely extended. Some languages seem not to allow a consecutive to

succeed itself; consecutive forms alternate with independent. This appears to be the case for some of Kiparsky's Indo-European examples, and is certainly true of some forms of modern Swahili. In some languages, consecutive constructions are identical in form - or nearly so - with certain independent constructions, often present - tense constructions or optatives. Other languages show distinct forms in consecutive strings. Still others - as, again, Swahili - show a mixture.

The original aim of the present study was to examine the role of the Kikuyu consecutive system in individual narrative style. Kikuyu - an important Bantu language spoken in Kenya - possesses an unusually complex system of consecutive constructions. Where other Bantu languages have at most one or two consecutive forms, Kikuyu has no fewer than six exclusively consecutive constructions, and three subjunctive constructions which may be used in consecutive clauses in present and future contexts. These figures exclude periphrastic constructions: certain auxiliaries are commonly used in consecutive clauses, thus increasing the inventory. Where a system of this sort can be maintained, it might be expected that use of consecutives would be fairly important to the language, and as well play a part in stylistic differentiation.

The forms and uses of the Kikuyu consecutives are as follows:¹

- a. **S-a-V-a** : used where the initial clause refers to past time on the day of reference.
- b. **S-raa-V-a** : used where the initial clause indicates past time on the day preceding that of reference.
- c. **S-ki-V-a** : used when the initial clause indicates past time previous to the day before that of reference.
- d. **S-ka-V-a** : used when the initial clause indicates habitual action and the consecutive clause a single action subsequent to each performance of that of the initial clause; temporal reference is irrelevant.
- e. **S-ka-V-ag-a** : used when the initial clause indicates habitual action and the consecutive clause action performed subsequent to that of the initial clause, differing from **S-ka-V-A** in that the action of the consecutive clause as well is habitual or continuative. Temporal reference is again irrelevant; this construction may not normally follow itself.
- f. **S-ti-V-e** : used when the verb of the consecutive clause is negative; this construction is extremely rare, negation in coordinate clauses normally involving the independent negative constructions.²

Examples 2-7 below illustrate the use of these constructions:

2. Ūmūūthī nī ndugire na **ndaarīma**
Today I cooked and cultivated
3. Ira nī ndīraarugire na ndīraarīma
Yesterday I cooked and cultivated
4. Iyo nī ndaarugire na ngīrīma
The day before yesterday I cooked and cultivated
5. Nī ndaarugaga na ngarīma
I used to cook and cultivate
6. Nī maakuaga na makarīūkaga
They used to die and would revive every time
7. Nī maathiire, makībaara, matione mūdū
They went, looked, (and) didn't see anyone

These constructions may not occur in the initial clause of a series. There is no fixed limit upon the length of a series of consecutive clauses; this is stylistically rather than grammatically determined. Change of subject does not end a string.

A count of occurrences of the above constructions in a fairly large body of text was made for this study. The contents of the corpus examined ranged from traditional oral literature to newspaper material. A fairly detailed account of the texts studied will be found in the bibliography. In addition to the verb-count, the texts were inspected for possible stylistic peculiarities.

The texts chosen were expected to be essentially similar. Though content varied greatly, including traditional literature, modern fiction, historical accounts and newspaper articles, all were basically statements of past events. Discussions of situations, present and past, were not included. Conversational materials were avoided, and dialogue imbedded in narrative was ignored for purposes of the count. The basic temporal reference of all texts was to the past, often the mythical past, and always earlier than the previous day.

A number of stylistic features were evident upon examination of the texts. The redundant style, as exemplified and described in Jones and Carter (1967), is by no means foreign to Kikuyu, though it is perhaps of less importance than it seems to have in Tonga. The 'techniques' recognised by Jones and Carter - staging, overlapping, repetition, and synonymous expressions - can all be identified in Kikuyu as well, and play a part in defining an individual's style. One informant made such use of the

overlapping technique as to approach the 'tedious and soporific rhythm' ascribed to the Tonga narrative in its written form.³ In most cases, however, the various techniques of the redundant style were found to be used in moderation in Kikuyu.

Stylistic differences in Kikuyu narrative are not limited to differences in use of the techniques of redundancy. Differences show up as well in the amount of description incorporated in the text. One of the oral sources characteristically spent noticeably more than the normal time in description of scenes, where most Kikuyu text concentrates on statement of action. In some cases there is a division of the narrative into discrete sections, analogous to paragraphs and chapters in written narrative in European languages, set off not only by subject matter but also by pauses or change of narrative pace. Some texts show considerable variation of pace within the narrative; in others, the narrative is relatively uniform, however long the text. A further stylistic factor is the technique of temporal transposition. This was particularly evident in the texts contributed by one informant, though not peculiar to his style. In the faster-moving portions of the narrative this informant would frequently transpose the action from the normal far-past to present time, frequently substituting dialogue for third-person narration as well.⁴

The question of narrative pace is an important one, especially since there is a direct correlation between narrative pace and consecutive usage. The results of the statistical count mentioned earlier and described in detail below show clear evidence of such a connection. As anyone who has listened to a really good story-teller knows, pace is all-important to the dramatic effect. A joke, however hilarious, when told by a good narrator, loses its humour if repeated verbatim by someone without the proper sense of timing. The same differential is seen when a passage in a skilfully written historical novel is compared with newspaper accounts of the same event. The true narrator uses his language in such a way as to build suspense and minimise monotony. There are numerous ways to create this effect of pacing without even, in oral styles, necessarily increasing the rate of speech. One means available to the Kikuyu speaker will be shown to be the use of the consecutive.

In each text examined, a count was made of the verbal elements of non-subordinate clauses. Five categories of verbal were recognised:

a. Consecutives: examples of the six constructions listed earlier, and of other constructions used similarly.

- b. **Descriptives:** constructions describing a scene rather than an action, including all habitual/continuatives and the various Kikuyu verbals roughly equivalent to the forms of the English verb 'to be'.
- c. **Pasts:** constructions not included in either of the above categories indicating action in the past.
- d. **Negatives:** all negative constructions.
- e. **Non-Pasts:** all constructions with present or future temporal reference.

These categories are by no means mutually exclusive. There is considerable overlapping of Categories a, b, d, and e, and c. may also overlap with d. The categories were selected and defined on the basis of their relevance to consecutive usage. Categories c, d, and e. normally interrupt consecutive strings, and though descriptive passages may contain habitual/continuative consecutive strings they too disrupt the train of actions. Out of the 5147 non-subordinate clauses examined,⁵ the number of verbal constructions in each of the five categories were as follows:

- a. **Consecutives** - 3998
- b. **Descriptives** - 931
- c. **Pasts** - 649
- d. **Negatives** - 223
- e. **Non-pasts** - 190

Clearly the consecutives are of great importance in Kikuyu narrative, if only from the numerical point of view. The vast majority of the constructions included in the figure above (which is well over 75 per cent of the total number of verbs counted) are examples of the far-past consecutive, *S-~~ka~~-V-a*. This is consistent with the setting of most literary narrative in the past earlier than the previous day. A fairly large proportion of these, however, amounting to 10 per cent of the total number of consecutives, are examples of the habitual/continuative consecutives *S-~~ka~~-V-a* and *S-~~ka~~-V-ag-a*. The resulting overlapping between consecutives and descriptives account for almost half the overlap found.

Statistically, variation in consecutive use would appear to have little stylistic relevance. The corpus investigated is remarkably uniform in this respect. Except for three texts, all from printed sources, the figure for consecutives accounts for half or more of the clauses in each text. There were no noticeable differences from one writer or narrator to

another, nor was there significant internal consistency in number of consecutives used in different texts from the same source. A given informant showed as much variation as did the corpus as a whole.

Surprisingly, in view of the clearly important role of consecutives, use of descriptives and non-pasts showed far more individual variation. Constructions in both these categories in fact interrupt the narrative defined as a series of actions occurring in the past. They are accordingly less important to the narrative as such than other constructions. Yet in the descriptive category one informant varied between 15 and 25 per cent, averaging 20 per cent, while another (the informant mentioned earlier as showing an unusual tendency to include description) ranged from 15 to 35 per cent, averaging 30 per cent.⁶ For non-pasts nearly all texts, oral or printed, showed under 5 per cent; in most cases no non-past constructions were included. The overall figure was less than 5 per cent of all constructions counted. Yet one informant averaged about 15 per cent in this category, falling below 5 per cent in only one text. This fact represents this informant's frequent use of the stylistic technique of transposition mentioned above. It might be said that the frequency of these two categories is to some extent a function of the narration rather than the narrator, in that some narratives require more description of scenes and statement of present context than do others. But the variation between narrators and the consistency within texts from the same source leave little doubt that personal characteristics are involved here as well.

Frequency of negative constructions proved irrelevant both to consecutive usage and to narrative style. Some variation in usage appeared, but with no internal consistency such as was found for certain narrators in the case of the above categories. In no case did negatives exceed 15 per cent, in only two texts did they exceed 10 per cent. In a sense, negatives do affect the frequency of consecutives, since in most cases use of a negative construction breaks the consecutive string. But this is of little significance, and the effect is in any case included in the figure for pasts. This last figure, that for non-consecutive pasts, is significant, highly so, for both consecutive usage and general style.

It is clear, if only from the overwhelmingly large percentage, that in Kikuyu narrative consecutive constructions are unmarked, unbroken consecutive strings the norm. Some of the shortest texts consist of a single non-consecutive (generally in the initial 'there was a man ...' or 'Rabbit and Hyena were friends ...') introducing a single string of consecutives,

broken only by subordinate clauses. Of course, the longer the narrative, the greater the probability of negatives or static description. But even quite long stories can contain little but consecutives. One text of 235 non-subordinate clauses showed a consecutive frequency of over 90 per cent. What is significant in Kikuyu style is not so much the degree to which consecutives are used as the decisions as to when and where not to use them.

In the majority of the narratives studied, internal structure divides the narrative into a number of discrete units. This system, as stated, is analogous to, if not identical with, paragraph or chapter division in European writing. In some cases, particularly in oral texts, some of this subdivision is unmarked by any interruption of the consecutive string. Pauses are frequently used for this purpose in oral delivery; in both oral and printed texts, the narrator occasionally resorts to use of the consecutive augmented with *-ki-*.⁷ The former means is useless in printed text; the latter is not limited to this function (one author used the augmented forms in nearly 50 per cent of his consecutives, with no evident stylistic purpose).⁸ The principal method of subdivision in printed works - one common as well in oral texts - is by initiation of a new string through insertion of a non-consecutive form or interpolation of a descriptive passage.

Use of an unbroken string of consecutives is, as stated, unmarked; it indicates in effect that the action-flow of the narrative is even, without interruption. Breaking this string therefore signals a change, whether accomplished by pause, use of augmented consecutive, or insertion of a non-consecutive. The attention of hearer or reader is drawn to a change of pace, shift of scene, the presentation of new information, or the end of one phase of the action and beginning of another. The way in which these breaks are manipulated is highly significant to Kikuyu style, though but poorly reflected in the statistics. The figures do not, for example, reflect Kago's use of consecutives and non-consecutives in his school readers. His percentages for consecutives are if anything above normal, those for pasts (and other non-consecutive categories) fairly low. Yet in some of the texts studied Kago makes considerable use of breaks in the consecutive string.

In slow, introductory passages and at points of transition from one major incident to the next, consecutives are avoided. The resultant string of non-consecutives gives even in print an impression of stasis. At points where major breaks in thought or scene occur - points which in

oral narrative would be marked by pauses - Kago almost unfailingly ends the string of consecutives and initiates a new string with one or more non-consecutive constructions. It is perhaps significant that these breaks in the consecutive string always coincide with the beginning of a fresh paragraph in Kago's texts.⁹ In this way - consciously or unconsciously - Kago manages to reproduce more of the element of pace than is normally possible in print. The normal Kikuyu narrative transferred to print loses a large proportion of its effectiveness, through the loss of inflection and voice-indicated narrative pacing. Kago's retention of the latter element greatly enhances the effect of the printed word. Yet this skilful manipulation of consecutive strings does not show up in the statistics - one informant whose oral performance was monotonously unbroken, with few pauses even at major discontinuities in the story line, showed abnormally high percentages for non-consecutive pasts, averaging over 25 per cent, well above Kago's average 15 per cent.

The relevance of consecutive usage in Kikuyu style, however, was not limited to matters of individual narrative technique. It also seemed important in the recognition and differentiation of discrete types or genres of narrative. Here the statistics do seem to reflect the role of the consecutive. The corpus was so selected as to allow one to assume homogeneity of genre, so to speak. And indeed, the texts examined showed a fair degree of statistical uniformity. However, total uniformity was not found.

In the most common pattern, the percentage of consecutives was over twice that for any other of the categories counted. Variations existed; the actual percentages varied considerably, and the next highest percentage was sometimes in the descriptives, sometimes in pasts. But these variations were in large part due to individual stylistic variation or to the specific content of the individual narrative. Seven exceptions were found. One of these will be excluded from this discussion. As it contained only 20 non-subordinate clauses, its divergence from the normal pattern was probably due to its short length. Other texts from the same source showed no abnormalities. The remaining texts, however, were the following:

<u>Text</u>	<u>Consecutives</u>	<u>Descriptives</u> (percentages)	<u>Pasts</u>
1. newspaper article	10	20	60
2. Autobiography (in Kago 4th reader)	35	45	35

3. newspaper editorial	35	30	40
4. Ngwenda Ûnjûrage (novelette)	50	15	45
5. oral account of Maasai raid	65	35	15
6. oral autobiography	65	55	20

Figures for negatives and non-pasts are not given above; they are largely irrelevant to the present discussion. Both figures show some variation, but none inconsistent with stylistic variations in other texts. The significance of these figures lies not so much in the relatively low percentages of consecutives - though these are unusual - as in the high figures elsewhere, and, in those cases where the corpus included other texts from the same source, the deviation from the author/narrator's normal pattern. It is only in texts 2, 5, and 6 above, out of the entire corpus, that the figure for descriptives rises above 30 per cent. The percentage for pasts rises above 30 per cent only in texts 1, 2, 3 and 4 above.

It is noteworthy that four of the above texts are printed, and that none is concerned with traditional themes from oral literature. Texts 3 and 4 are, of course, fictional. But they deal with contemporary events and in fact claim to be fictionalised accounts of factual incidents. One is tempted, on the basis of the statistics and their correlation with content in these cases, to recognise four types or genres within the corpus of Kikuyu narrative examined, differentiated by frequency of consecutives relative to other non-subordinate verbal constructions. These are:

a. Anecdotal: factual or fictional, with emphasis on action rather than setting, specific incident rather than general trend, paced to excite rather than to inform; characterised by infrequent use of non-consecutives and little or no overt description. Here belong the majority of traditional oral literature and narratives of historical events.

b. Descriptive: factual (at least as represented in the corpus), emphasising scene more than action, describing a series of past states, not a sequence of events; characterised by high relative frequency of descriptive clauses and a low ratio of non-habitual consecutives. Here belong texts 2, 5, and 6 listed above, all dealing with the historic past - including two autobiographies - and relating 'the way things were' rather than 'what happened next'.

c. Relational: factual, without emphasis, slow and unemotional in pace; characterised by infrequent use of consecutives and moderate use of descriptives. Here belongs text 1; this may be said to be typical of the journalistic style.

d. Allegorical: editorial, embodying factual or fictitious examples, slow in pace though high in emotion; characterised by a nearly equal ratio of consecutives and non-consecutive pasts. Here belong texts 3 and 4.

It is necessary to point out that in the majority of cases it would be misleading to classify any given text as belonging wholly to one or another of the 'genres' tentatively described above. In nearly every longer text of the Anecdotal type, for instance, there occur descriptive passages which, if analysed individually, would be assigned to the Descriptive genre. Conversely, in the historical and autobiographical texts classed in the Descriptive genre there occur passages indistinguishable from the Anecdotal style. Similar overlapping occurs in most cases.

To what extent, then, are these divisions valid classifications of Kikuyu narrative prose? It is true that they are based not only on differences in consecutive frequency and subject matter but also on different ratios of stasis, action, and emotion in the narrative. In the bulk of the traditional oral literature emphasis is upon action and emotion. The narrator makes full use of all the stylistic techniques at his command - redundancy, speech rate, intonation, etc. - to stimulate interest and evoke desired audience reactions. There is only minimal attention to setting the stage. In non-traditional historical accounts, on the other hand, the goal is not so much entertainment as the passing on of information. In trickster tales or stories of the mythical past there is little need for background. But conditions of a generation past require explanation. The result is greater emphasis on scene than on action. Again in journalistic writing description is less important. It is not surprising that in Kikuyu, as in other languages, the typical news story is dull, though informative. This type of 'literature' is almost universally characterised by a dry, unemotional style, the aim being unadorned statement of fact. In those pieces classed as Allegorical, emotion is emphasised. But at least in the examples found the action is spread over long periods of time, and broken up by overt moralising comment. This contrasts with the normally brief time-span and covert moral of the traditional narrative. The pace of action is in these pieces slow, and the narration itself uninspired.

Yet despite the apparent correspondence of the classifications with structure and content, there are a number of reasons for suspecting the validity of these 'genres'. Only the Anecdotal and Descriptive occur in

both written and oral form in the corpus. The Relational style, of course, almost certainly has the status of an independent genre; journalistic prose almost everywhere seems to show a distinctive style. Yet it is highly unlikely that oral parallels exist - save perhaps in radio broadcasts - and nearly certain that the style, like the newspaper itself, is a foreign innovation. The status of the Allegorical is most uncertain. Only two instances, both written, occur in the corpus, and it is not clear to what extent their similarities are coincidental. It may well have status as a distinct genre, and oral equivalents could exist, perhaps in sermons. Yet at the same time this may merely be a variant of Anecdotal or Descriptive, the difference being due to the medium, span of time covered, extent of editorial comment, or other factors. While it seems likely that the Anecdotal and Descriptive, both represented in oral as well as written prose, exist as distinct types of narrative, it is impossible to specify with certainty what characteristics might distinguish an Anecdotal narrative containing much description from a Descriptive narrative including much action, on the basis of the evidence at hand.

It seemed desirable to test the validity of the above conclusions as to Kikuyu narrative style and the role of the consecutive system. It was accordingly decided to investigate, for comparative purposes, the function of the consecutive in Swahili literature as well. Swahili, though not very close to Kikuyu linguistically, is a roughly similar Bantu language. Its verbal system differs considerably from that of Kikuyu, but includes consecutives, which function essentially as do those of Kikuyu. Since the two languages are spoken in fairly close proximity to one another - Swahili being in fact much used as a lingua franca and language of education in Kikuyu territory - it was felt that, despite any structural differences, the literatures of the two languages could be expected to show roughly similar and certainly comparable characteristics.

The verbal system of Standard Swahili includes only two consecutive constructions, but, as in Kikuyu, there also exist subjunctive forms used in consecutive as well as independent clauses. The infinitive is also frequently used in contexts analogous to those in which consecutives occur.¹⁰

The Swahili consecutives are:

- a. S-**ka**-V-**a** : affirmative, used in all past and some non-past contexts.
- b. S-**si**-V-**e** : negative, used in all temporal contexts, though rare.¹¹

Examples of their use are:

8. Alipika nyama **akaila**

She cooked the meat (and) ate it

9. Walikaribia nyumbani **wasiingie**

They went up to the house (and) didn't enter

These, like the Kikuyu consecutives, may not occur in the initial clause of the series (at least in Standard Swahili). Again as in Kikuyu, there is no fixed limit to the length of a string, and change of subject does not necessarily break the string.

The corpus of text examined (for details see bibliography), owing to the greater availability and variety of printed Swahili literature, was much larger than that of the Kikuyu study. Again it included oral and written materials, traditional and modern, factual and fictional. Translations were avoided, except in one case, included for comparison. All texts were prose statements of past events. Again conversational materials and discussions of present or past situations were excluded, and dialogue in the narrative ignored.

No close investigation similar to that made in Kikuyu of stylistic techniques was made, other than the verb count. The corpus was felt to be too large and diversified for such an investigation to be worthwhile, given the limitations of the present study. A few points were noted, however. It was clear, for instance, that as in Kikuyu pace of narrative and consecutive usage are closely linked in Swahili. This was especially apparent in some of the texts with low overall consecutive frequencies. For practical reasons, it had been decided in the case of most book-length narratives to count sample passages rather than the whole: generally a chapter or two from the beginning, a passage of similar length from the middle, and the final chapter(s). In such cases, in texts low in consecutives, the middle chapters, where action normally reached its highest pace, usually showed the greatest frequency of consecutives.

In the count five categories, as nearly as possible equivalent to those of the Kikuyu count, were distinguished:

a. Consecutives: example of the two constructions listed above, and of subjunctives and periphrastic constructions similarly used; the 'consecutive' use of the infinitive was not included in the count.¹²

b. Descriptives: all constructions involving the verb *kuwa* 'to be' and its equivalents and alternants.¹³

- c. Pasts: constructions indicating past action, other than those included in the above two categories.
- d. Negatives: all negative constructions.
- e. Non-Pasts: all constructions with present or future temporal reference.

As in Kikuyu, there was much overlapping between categories. However, owing to lack of habitual consecutives, Swahili shows less overlap between Consecutives and Descriptives, and in fact less overall overlap, than did Kikuyu. Despite the general similarity of the Swahili rules for consecutive usage to those of Kikuyu, the results of the count were startlingly different. Out of 7926 non-subordinate clauses examined, the proportions were as follows:

a.	Consecutives	-	2609
b.	Descriptives	-	1398
c.	Pasts	-	3415
d.	Negatives	-	564
e.	Non-Pasts	-	778

Surprisingly, though the total number of clauses is much higher than that of the Kikuyu count, the number of consecutive clauses is far smaller, even when Kikuyu's habitual consecutives, amounting to 10 per cent of the total figure, are omitted. At the same time, the figure for pasts, in Kikuyu only third highest, is the largest in Swahili. The figures for Descriptives, Negatives, and non-pasts are roughly comparable with those in Kikuyu, considering the larger corpus. That for non-pasts is somewhat larger, but still well under 10 per cent of the total. Again, negatives and non-pasts are for the most part irrelevant to the following discussion.

Clearly the role of the consecutive in Swahili narrative relative to other verbal constructions is far different from that it has in Kikuyu. Whereas in Kikuyu the unbroken consecutive string is the norm, over half the texts examined in the Swahili sample showed fewer than 25 per cent consecutives. Most of these had fewer than 15 per cent; a startling contrast with Kikuyu where only one text showed under 30 per cent. Examination of individual Swahili texts showed two predominant patterns. In one non-consecutive pasts accounted for over 50 per cent, consecutives and descriptives each under 25 per cent in most cases. In the other, consecutives showed over 50 per cent, descriptives and pasts normally less than 25 per cent each. The former group included almost half the texts, the latter about a fifth of the total. A much smaller group had descriptives

as the highest category. A number of variations and minor patterns were found as well.

The second pattern, with consecutives dominant, corresponds to that most common in Kikuyu. In Swahili, it was found in the oral materials examined, and in a few of the printed texts. Nearly all printed texts exhibiting this pattern dealt with traditional or pseudo-traditional themes. One exception was a collection of narratives linked by a tale-telling framework (similar to that of the *Thousand and One Nights*); another an editorial cast in allegorical folk-tale form. Clearly, this pattern is associated in Swahili with the traditional oral style. It would seem, however, to be becoming unproductive; even certain texts whose themes would be compatible in fact showed the first pattern, with non-consecutive pasts dominant.

No system of division into distinct 'genres' even as clear-cut as that hypothesized above for Kikuyu was apparent in the Swahili materials.

Some parallels exist, but the data are confusing. A possible system, showing fairly little similarity to that given for Kikuyu, is shown below:

a. Anecdotal: i. oral/traditional: factual or fictional, emphasising action and incident; characterised by a majority of consecutive clauses. This is associated with traditional history and folkloric themes.

ii. modern: factual or fictional, again emphasising action and incident; characterised by a percentage of pasts over 50 per cent, consecutives passing 25 per cent in the fastest-moving passages and texts - the most action-packed portions of novels, or descriptions of sporting events. This may be associated with traditional themes, but most often is not; it includes novels and newspaper articles of all types.

b. Descriptive: i. normal: factual or fictional, often with considerable editorial comment; consecutives minimal, descriptive clauses regularly above 25 per cent, often passing 50 per cent, non-consecutive pasts 25 per cent or higher. This pattern is found in Shaaban Robert's biographies and some journalistic writing, especially editorials.

ii. archaizing: this is identical in its characteristics with b. i, normal descriptive, save for a reversal of the percentages of consecutives and pasts; in the corpus examined the sole example found was a serialised editorial in *Taifa* advocating use of Swahili and written in pseudo-folktale form.

c. Historical: factual; consecutives and pasts both over 25 per cent, with the latter slightly predominating; the higher than normal use

of consecutives does not seem in this case to be related to the pace of the text. Descriptives are moderately important, and non-past forms are of at least equal frequency, an unusual characteristic in past-time narrative. This is found only in two full-length biographies, one written by a European, rather than a native Swahili speaker.

As was the case in Kikuyu, it is perhaps misleading to apply such genre classification to an entire work. Especially in longer pieces (more common here than in the Kikuyu sample), internal stylistic variation exists. The validity of genres such as b. ii. and c. must be questioned; too few examples are included in the corpus to justify treatment of these as discrete styles rather than transitional forms. The absence of parallelism with the Kikuyu analysis raises further questions as to the validity of both. To be sure, the Swahili oral/traditional Anecdotal and the Kikuyu Anecdotal are clearly identical, and the Swahili Archaizing Descriptive could be identified with the Kikuyu Descriptive. But otherwise, though there are correspondences of theme, 'genres' do not coincide. What is there to explain the difference?

The absence of habitual consecutives in Swahili may be responsible to some degree. Overlap between descriptive and consecutive indices in Swahili is, of course, possible, since periphrastic constructions with the consecutive of *kuwa* exist. But these are rare, while Kikuyu habitual consecutives are quite frequent. But this is not enough to account for the virtual absence of consecutives from many of the Swahili passages examined. Neither can the failure to count 'consecutive' use of the Swahili infinitive explain the gap.

Historical reasons must be sought. In both Kikuyu and Swahili, the style with predominance of consecutives must be taken to be basic. The fact that identical patterns occur in both languages (and in other consecutive-using Bantu languages), the use of this pattern in the earliest and most traditional materials in both languages, and the continued dominance in oral materials, convince one that narration of past events has long been characterised by maximal use of consecutives, minimal use of all other verbal constructions. Of course details vary from narrator to narrator and story to story. One cannot assume the existence of a completely uniform style. But the common denominator was - and in oral narration still is - predominance of consecutive clauses. In Kikuyu, in all but journalistic prose, the consecutive retains its dominant status. Why, in modern written Swahili, has it lost it?

It is worthy of note that there is some differentiation within Swahili in the patterns with low consecutive ratio. Non-fiction without literary pretensions tends to show larger proportions of consecutives than fiction. Though non-consecutives predominate even in these works, consecutives are not at the minimal level found elsewhere; in nearly half the Swahili journalistic prose examined consecutives reach 25 per cent or above. Even in fiction the Swahili consecutive is far from dead. In individual passages, where action is swiftest, it often reaches proportions almost equal to those of the traditional oral style.

Why has the role of the Swahili consecutive changed? It has not been eliminated; the rules for its use have not changed significantly; it still plays a part in controlling the pace of the narrative, and in oral exemplars is of undiminished importance. Part of the answer must be the written format. It cannot be easy to maintain narrative pace in relating a book-length story to an apathetic stack of paper. Both the medium and the length of the product contribute to a slowing of the overall pace. In both Kikuyu and Swahili, in both oral and written materials, there is, as has been pointed out, a clear connection between narrative pace and consecutive usage. The slowing of pace imposed (or permitted?) by the medium thus automatically lowers the proportion of consecutives.

This, however, cannot be the whole explanation. There are Swahili writings of book-length which show proportions of consecutives no different from those of oral narrative. Another factor - I feel of more importance - must be the European model. Admittedly, explanation of all deviations from traditional oral forms as the result of colonial influence is an oversimplification too frequently made in studies of African literatures. The shift from oral to written literature is of course directly attributable to outside contact in most areas. But this cannot be held responsible for all the changes occurring, surely. However, in this instance some influence must be recognised.

Swahili had a pre-European written literature, based to a large extent on Islamic (Arabic and Persian) models. It consisted primarily of verse, prose being written mainly as factual record, not art. Significantly, prose narrative recorded in the Arabic-based Swahili script shows the high proportion of consecutives typical of oral and traditional narrative. The change to minimisation of consecutives is post-European; it occurs in romanised Swahili, and is at its highest in the works which have the greatest artistic pretensions.

Consider the standards of Anglo-American literature, as taught under the Anglo-American educational system. Characterisation, description, avoidance of monotony, division into sentence and paragraph - these are among the most basic Anglo-American literary criteria.¹⁴ It would be hard to imagine a more complete opposite to the traditional Kikuyu or Swahili narrative, with its focus on action, not description, its use of redundancy for effect, and its characteristic lack of clear-cut formally marked sub-division.

The difference does not reflect any significant difference between the peoples involved. The divergence is due simply to the fact that oral and written narrative have different potentialities, and must be judged by different standards. The written literatures of Europe have spent centuries in evolving, and even some comparatively late forms violate the modern criteria as completely as the traditional Kikuyu story. Oral literature in English, and, in fact, the English personal letter, are still incompletely assimilated to written standards.

Unhappily, whereas in Europe written styles evolved slowly and naturally, as writers realised the potentials of their own languages in written form, Kikuyu and Swahili writers are in effect faced with the necessity of transforming their styles overnight. Some have attempted to retain traditional styles, though these lose much in transposition from oral to written presentation. Others, like Shaaban Robert, have apparently adopted many of the stylistic features of English prose. Is it coincidence that Shaaban Robert's biographies, unlike other Swahili biographies with fewer literary pretensions, are practically descriptive essays? Is it coincidence that the most literary writings examined for this study show a normal maximum of one consecutive to a sentence, a use of sentence breaks corresponding to those of English, and a great tendency (visible in the works of Shaaban Robert and others) to avoid use of consecutives where English style (averse to over-use of coordinating conjunctions) forbids the use of 'and'?

Much such modern Swahili literature reads like a direct translation from English; in fact, many translations and writings by English speakers are less 'English' in their style. Along with a highly restricted use of consecutives, forced into English models, go an increase in description, avoidance of the 'redundant technique', anglicisation of vocabulary and sentence patterns,¹⁵ punctuation on English models,¹⁶ and themes drawn from contemporary existence. The total effect is very far from that of the

traditional narrative.

Kikuyu shows less such anglicisation than Swahili. Kikuyu has had a shorter history of exposure to English models; Kikuyu writings, also, lack the wide audience Swahili has in East Africa. The Kikuyu writers most likely to judge their literature by European standards are more likely to use English or Swahili than Kikuyu in their work. Degree of detribalisation may also play some part. Even so, it is noteworthy that Kikuyu journalistic style differs not at all from its Swahili equivalent. It is probably also significant that the two examples of Kikuyu written fiction examined which lacked traditional themes do show some lowering of the ratio of consecutives and an increase in description. The result, though not identical with its Swahili counterpart, is at least a step in that direction.

What, then, may we conclude from this study? In both Kikuyu and Swahili the consecutive plays a not unimportant stylistic role. In both its use is directly related to narrative pace, just as frequency of habituais and verbs such as *kuwa* is to the ratio between action and stasis, and as amount of dialogue may perhaps be related to degree of emotion. In both, it predominates in oral narrative.

The genres tentatively identified above perhaps have little or no real basis. It may be safe to recognise in each language a distinction between action-oriented Anecdotal and a more static Descriptive style. But such a distinction does not in Swahili show a perfect correlation with consecutive usage. The recognition in either language of genres on the basis of verbal statistics alone does not seem reasonable at this time. Many variations in consecutive usage seem due to factors unrelated to genre.

In both Kikuyu and Swahili, written literature based on traditional oral themes retains most of the characteristics of the oral style, including consecutive usage. In both, where writers make use of contemporary themes and consciously strive for literary excellence, use of consecutives becomes less frequent, and the style generally more closely approximates that of English. In Swahili, it would appear that the consecutive has become consciously associated with the traditional oral theme and setting. Its use in writing appears to have some of the archaizing flavour of the bible or the fairy-tale in English. This may seem incompatible with the persistence of traditional consecutive usage in oral style, but the incongruity is perhaps only to be expected in a developing literature. It is certainly demonstrable that the archaic, mythical associations of the

consecutive in writing exist in Swahili. This is not to imply that the consecutive no longer plays a part in Swahili or Kikuyu prose style. Nor is it suggested that East African narrative is becoming in effect a literature of translation.

The modern East African writer - and probably the African writer in general - is faced with three alternatives. He may transcribe faithfully traditional oral forms and aim for excellence by the standards traditionally applied to oral narrative. In this case, owing to the inadequacies of the printed word, he must fail to reproduce many of the factors contributing to oral excellence.

Again, he may choose to follow European models to a greater or lesser degree, and transfer to Kikuyu or Swahili the standards of excellence which have grown out of the slow evolution of European writing. In so doing, he must often do violence to his native tongue, perhaps producing a work which can attain stylistic excellence only in translation. It should be remembered that the European literary tradition has evolved languages noticeably different, in many respects, from their oral equivalents. Most African languages have no such pre-existing literary counterparts.

Or he may do neither. He may, that is, attempt a compromise, making a contribution to the evolutionary process which may, in time, permit development of an indigenous written literature which will make use of the potential both of the writers' language and of the written medium.

The variety of patterns found in the Swahili corpus shows the extent to which this process of experimentation is in progress. Individual writers show distinctive patterns of consecutive usage, and only where traditional themes are maintained or where there has been clear imposition of foreign standards do patterns become general. Strangely enough, it is perhaps from non-literary writing, where the influences of foreign and traditional models are least noticeable, that a truly Swahili standard for written literature seems most likely to emerge.

In Kikuyu the process seems less advanced. Most narrative prose available in print is in fact traditional in theme, and presented for purposes not purely literary. Kago's use of interruption of consecutive strings and strings of non-consecutives to replace the pauses and pacing otherwise lost in transcription of oral narrative may point the way to be followed in the development of a native written style. But the lack of variety in the Kikuyu corpus as compared to the Swahili seems to reflect the less advanced stage of Kikuyu writing.

It seems probable that consecutives will continue to play a role in Kikuyu and Swahili style. Their frequency in text may be lowered in the written medium, but only one text out of the entire corpus examined for this study contained no consecutives, that being an extremely brief Swahili news article. It is unlikely that they will be eliminated. Indeed reduction in overall frequency may reflect an increased stylistic function, as consecutive clauses become marked rather than unmarked, indicative of accelerated, rather than merely non-decelerated, pace.

Much investigation remains to be done in the area of African stylistics. Even in the limited area discussed here, experimentation to determine native-speakers' attitudes to differing types and proportions of consecutive use is clearly desirable, as is expansion of the corpus examined and more detailed examination of those texts already included. This investigation has revealed some interesting points bearing on consecutive function and style; but it is only a minor contribution to a little-known field.

NOTES

1. Construction patterns adapted from Bennett (1969); S = subjective prefix, V = verb stem, V-ag = verb stem including the habitual/continuative extension -ag -, - = morpheme boundary. The term 'day of reference' may be equivalent to the day of speaking, but in some contexts may be another day, past or future. The term 'initial clause' refers to the first clause of a series of actions, which must normally have as its verb a non-consecutive construction; 'consecutive clause' refers to a subsequent clause containing a consecutive verb form. Orthographic conventions in both Kikuyu and Swahili citations are those of the standard orthography, modified in the case of Kikuyu by indication of length. Tone is not marked as irrelevant to the present study.
2. In all languages which include consecutive constructions, negative constructions are rare. This Kikuyu construction is especially so. While it is cited in grammars and can be found in some printed materials, it does not appear in any of the oral materials I have collected.
3. Jones and Carter (1967), p. 112.
4. Kiparsky (1968) discusses the 'historical present' and distinguishes it from use of present forms with consecutive function in older Indo-European. That the distinction between the two is valid is proven by the existence of both in highly developed form in Kikuyu narration.
5. This figure is not indicative of the total volume of text examined; since some works were merely sampled, not counted in their entirety, and since subordinate clauses and dialogue were excluded, the total length of the works investigated was much more than 5147 clauses.

6. All percentages are rounded to the nearest 5 per cent.
7. The function of this prefix is in some ways unclear. It may be inserted - immediately before the position of the objective prefix - in most Kikuyu constructions. It has been said to add 'emphasis' but the actual semantic correlations are obscure. For discussion, see Bennett (1969).
8. Though of course the idiosyncrasy plays a part in defining the author's individual style.
9. Not all paragraph breaks, however, mark the beginning of new consecutive strings. It is clear that the paragraphing in Kago's readers is not a conscious reflection of the Kikuyu structure.
10. It is used, for example, in sentences such as *alicheza na kuimba* 'he danced and sang'. Its use differs from that of the consecutive in that the infinitive is so used when two actions are more or less simultaneous, the consecutive when they follow one another in time. The infinitive, moreover, lacks the recursive possibilities of the consecutive, cannot be used outside the same sentence, and must share the same subject as the initial verb.
11. The status of this construction, like that of the Kikuyu negative consecutive, is problematical. In form it is identical with the negative subjunctive, an independent construction. This construction, in most of its non-independent occurrences, is best interpreted as an absolute construction, a type found in a specific class of temporal adverbial clauses. Example 9, thus, could equally well be translated 'they went up to the house without entering'. Where this type of translation seemed probable the clause was not counted as non-subordinate, and the construction was classified as absolute. In some texts and some instances, however, such an interpretation seemed impossible, and in these comparatively few cases this was counted as a consecutive construction.
12. The primary reason for exclusion of the infinitive was that such items were not clauses, having no finite verb. The semantic differentiation from the consecutive discussed in note 11 also played a part in this decision, however.
13. Though no habitual /continuatives occur as distinct constructions in Swahili, there are periphrastic equivalents formed with *kuwa* followed by an absolute construction, as in *nilikuwa nikifanya kazi* 'I was working', equivalent to the Kikuyu *nĩ ndaarutaga wĩra* with its habitual verb. This category in Swahili thus includes semantic equivalents of all the constructions included in the Kikuyu counterpart.
14. It will be clear to those familiar with Arabic prose that avoidance of monotony and textual division at least are not among the traditional criteria for Arabic literary excellence. Only the European influence can account for these changes in Swahili style.
15. As in the English-like transposition of sentences such as '*kwa nini*', *aliuliza msichana* ' "Why?" asked the girl'.

16. To the Bantu languages of East Africa punctuation is foreign, and the attempts at punctuation by East Africans of texts in their native languages are very often a hopeless jumble, however good a command of punctuation in English they may have. Many seem to use only the comma, and insert it more or less at random. Even in printed form there is no clear standard, and the newspapers are particularly inconsistent.

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In addition to the above, materials were taken from the newspapers *Taifa*, *Taifaleo*, and *Mũgambo wa Agikūyū*. The written texts were supplemented by a number of oral narratives from a variety of sources. Those for Kikuyu I collected and transcribed myself; for the Swahili oral materials used I am indebted to Dr. Judith Olinick. A small number of unpublished Kikuyu texts collected by A. Ruffell Barlow were examined as well. It will be apparent from the above that nearly all possible types of past narrative are represented in the printed materials; in the oral only historical narrative and traditional literature were represented, though these include narratives of European origin and personal autobiographies.

I wish at this juncture to offer thanks as well to colleagues of the Department of African Languages and Literature of the University of Wisconsin for their comments, criticisms, and suggestions.