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# ANIMACY, OBJECTS AND CLITICS IN SESOTHO[1]

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In this paper a close look is taken at the object relation in Sesotho. The properties of word order, subjectivization, and cliticization are considered carefully as possible criteria for direct object status. The extreme importance of *animacy* in determining which argument(s) of a verb will receive direct object properties is demonstrated with respect to utterances with a benefactive and an accusative object, as well as sentences with an "affected possessor" and a possessed (body) part. A refinement in the use of cliticization as a direct object criterion is proposed on the basis of the need to distinguish between different *means* by which a clitic object marker can come into being (pronominalization, left-dislocation, relativization, object-agreement). It is concluded that the direct object is as much a *discourse* notion as it is a grammatical notion in Sesotho, as it probably is in (Eastern) Bantu as a whole.

## 1. Introduction

Over the past few years renewed interest in the nature of grammatical relations has resulted in a number of studies devoted to the nature of the (direct) object in various Central Bantu languages. While the approach has

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sometimes varied, each study attempts to provide a structure of *relations* (grammatical or otherwise) into which the various arguments of the Bantu verb can be hierarchized. These attempts have at times met with certain difficulties, not the least of which is the problem of applying such traditional notions as "direct" vs. "indirect" object to the Bantu structures. A typical Bantu sentence consists of a subject, an agglutinated verbal complex, and a potential sequence of one to three nouns (or their corresponding pronouns, incorporated into the verbal complex). Since these nouns (and pronouns) are not case-marked, nor are they typically preceded by prepositions except in recent developments, the surface structure of such utterances as that from Sesotho in (1)

(1) ke-bótsellítsé baná ngoanáná lipótso 'I asked the girl a question
I-asked/APP children girl question for the children'

deceptively suggests double (and even triple) accusatives, or direct objects. Recognizing, however, that such nouns display different grammatical properties (to be discussed below), Bantuists have developed terminology distinguishing a number of kinds of objects: principal, subsidiary, proximate, applied, directional, partitive, prepositional, etc.[2] These notions have in common the desire to develop appropriate terminology for Bantu, rather than the desire to fit Bantu within some universal framework. It is clear that Bantu has some of its own biases in the way it treats objects, but unless language is to have infinite ways of assigning hierarchical structure to the various arguments of a verb, we must argue that there is something basically non-arbitrary about the way Bantu accomodates its many objects.

In any study of the object relation in Bantu (whether comparative or language-specific), two separate steps must be taken. First, one must determine what the general properties of an object are. Second, one must determine *which* arguments (nouns and pronouns) can have access to these properties. Only after these two steps have been taken, and the results compared from languages representative of the Bantu zone, can we approach the most important question: *why* these properties and *why* these arguments?

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[2]For Sesotho, see in particular Jacottet [1936:160-163] and Doke [1957:399-401].

It is these considerations which motivate the present study. In the following paragraphs, a close look is taken at the object relation in Sesotho, a Southern Bantu language (Guthrie S.33) spoken in Lesotho and parts of South Africa. As implied in the title, our concern will be, first, to demonstrate the role of animacy in determining object status, and second, to evaluate the use of cliticization as a criterion for establishing objecthood. It will be shown that non-grammatical considerations play a critical role in determining grammatical relations, and that the only adequate approach to the Sesotho (and Bantu) object relation is one which derives grammatical relations directly from the semantics and pragmatics of communication.

## 2. Animacy

While Kimenyi [1976], Gary and Keenan [1977], Duranti and Byarushengo [1977], and others, have used a number of additional tests, we shall be concerned here only with the following three general criteria for hierarchizing or "ranking" the arguments of a verb:

(i) ***Word order:*** Greater proximity to the verb may mean that a given noun has higher ranking (is more object-like) than a noun with lesser proximity to the verb.

(ii) ***Subjectivization:*** Greater accessibility to the subject slot of a passivized verb may mean that a non-subject noun in the corresponding active sentence is more object-like than one with lesser accessibility to the subject slot of the passive.

(iii) ***Cliticization:*** Greater accessibility to the clitic infix position may mean that the corresponding noun is more object-like than a noun with lesser accessibility to the clitic infix position.

A noun which can occur directly after the verb, which can be subjectivized in the corresponding passive, and which can be cliticized in the infix position is generally said to be a principal, proximate, or ***direct*** object (henceforth, DO). We shall have more to say about these notions as criteria for DO status, but first consider the following factors influencing the ranking of non-subject arguments (cf. Hawkinson and Hyman [1974]):

(i) *Case relations:* An argument whose semantic case is higher in the following hierarchy, BEN > DAT > ACC > INSTR [incomplete], will tend to have more DO properties than an argument whose semantic case is lower in the hierarchy.

(ii) *Animacy:* An argument whose referent is higher in the following *personal* hierarchy, 1st > 2nd > 3rd human > 3rd animal > 3rd inanimate [incomplete], will tend to have more DO properties than an argument whose referent is lower in this hierarchy (henceforth referred to as "animacy").

(iii) *Determinedness:* An argument whose referent is more determined (given, old, definite, specific) will tend to have more DO properties than an argument whose referent is less determined (new, indefinite, non-specific).

In this section we shall be concerned primarily with the role of animacy in determining DO status. In order to isolate the animacy factor the following benefactive paradigms will serve as test sentences:

(2) Test sentences

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| a. | I cooked food for the child | BEN=human | ACC=nonhuman |
| b. | I cooked food for the feast | BEN=nonhuman | ACC=nonhuman |
| c. | I called the children for the feast | BEN=nonhuman | ACC=human |
| d. | I called the children for the chief | BEN=human | ACC=human |

As can be seen to the right, all four possible combinations of human/non-human BEN/ACC are considered. The presence of a benefactive (whether human or non-human) is made possible by the -il/el- applicative extension (APP), which in the examples cited in this paper fuses with the -il- past tense suffix. We shall gloss verbs which carry this applicative extension as 'cook/APP', 'call/APP', etc., rather than attempting to indicate the morpheme breaks. We also will not normally provide an English translation, since the meaning will be clear from the word by word gloss which accompanies each example.

We begin, then, by considering the word order properties of test sentences a-d, in (3).

(3) a. ke-phehétsé ngoaná lijó I-cooked/APP child food
*ke-phehétsé lijó ngoaná I-cooked/APP food child

(3) cont.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| b. | ke-phehétsé mokété lijó | I-cooked/APP feast food |
| | ke-phehétsé lijó mokéte | I-cooked/APP food feast |
| c. | ke-bítselítsé baná mokéte | I-called/APP children feast |
| | *ke-bítselítsé mokété baná | I-called/APP feast children |
| d. | ke-bítselítsé morena baná | I-called chief children [A] |
| | ke-bítselítsé baná morena | I-called children chief [A] |

As seen from the second example in (3a) and (3c), when two nouns follow the verb, one of which is human, the other of which is nonhuman, the human noun *must,* independent of its semantic case (BEN or ACC), directly follow the verb. When both nouns are nonhuman (3b) or both nouns human (3d), both word orders are possible, resulting in ambiguity if both interpretations make sense. Both sentences in (3d) have the two meanings 'I called the children for the chief' and 'I called the chief for the children', and are therefore marked [A] for "ambiguous". The two sentences in (3b) mean 'I cooked the food for the feast', since the other interpretation 'I cooked the feast for the food' is not likely.[3]

In (4) we attempt to subjectivize each noun in the four test sentences.

(4) Subjectivization

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| a. | ngoaná ó-phehétsoé lijó | child he-was-cooked/APP food |
| | lijó lí-phehétsoé ngoaná | food it-was-cooked/APP child |
| b. | mokété ó-phehétsoé lijó | feast it-was-cooked/APP food |
| | lijó lí-phehétsoé mokéte | food it-was-cooked/APP feast |
| c. | baná bá-bítselítsoé mokéte | children they-were-called/APP feast |
| | *mokété ó-bítselítsoé baná | feast it-was-called/APP children |
| d. | morena ó-bítselítsoé baná | chief he-was-called/APP children [A] |
| | baná bá-bítselítsoé morena | children they-were-called/APP chief [A] |

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[3]Compare, however, the following two sentences which are ambiguous:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| (i) | ke-rékétsé táfolé leséla | I-bought/APP table cloth |
| (ii) | ke-rékétsé lesélá táfole | I-bought/APP cloth table |

Although it is more likely that someone would buy a cloth for a table than a table for a cloth, both sentences potentially carry both meanings.

Here we observe only one case where subjectivization is not possible: the second sentence of (4c), where there is a nonhuman BEN and a human ACC. Even the nonhuman ACC noun lijó 'food', which could not occur directly after the verb in (3a), can subjectivize, as seen in (4a).

Finally, turning to the third criterion, we attempt to cliticize each noun in the four test sentences in (5).

(5) Cliticization

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| a. | ke-mó-phehétsé lijó | I-him-cooked/APP food |
| | ke-lí-phehétsé ngoaná | I-it-cooked/APP child |
| b. | ke-ó-phehétsé lijó | I-it-cooked/APP food [it for feast] |
| | ke-lí-phehétsé mokéte | I-it-cooked/APP feast [it food] |
| c. | ke-ba-bítselítsé mokéte | I-them-called/APP feast |
| | *ke-o-bítselítsé baná | I-it-called children [it for feast] |
| d. | ke-mo-bítselítsé baná | I-him-called/APP children [A] |
| | ke-ba-bítselítsé morena | I-them-called/APP chief [A] |

Again, it is only the second sentence in (5c) which fails our test, and the two sentences in (5d) are ambiguous as to whether the noun or pronoun is BEN or ACC.

The following conclusions can be drawn from the data in (3), (4), and (5).

(i) Human nouns precede nonhuman nouns.[4]

(ii) When a nonhuman BEN combines with a human ACC (the opposite of one's expectancies), the former ceases to bear a direct relationship to the verb, and thus cannot undergo subjectivization and cliticization.

(iii) When both nouns are equal in animacy, there is potential ambiguity, with both word orders being possible. Note that the choice of word order in such cases will depend on the givenness/newness of each argument. Thus, the first sentence in (3b) answers the question 'what did you cook for the feast?', while the second sentence answers the question 'what did you cook the food for?'.

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[4]Cf. Jacottet [1936:161]: "If the *two objects are nouns,* both are of course placed after the verb, the nearest object (of the person) coming first, the other object (of the thing) following it" [his emphasis].

We tentatively conclude, then, that except for mokéte 'feast' in the (c) sentences, both nouns are DO's in all of the above examples. This includes lijó 'food' in (3a), even though it cannot occur directly after the verb. We maintain that it is a DO whose position, however, is restricted by a surface constraint disallowing the postverbal sequence *nonhuman - human. What will be interesting to us is explaining why (4a) and (5a) have different grammatical properties from (4c) and (5c), since both the (a) and (c) sentences involve a human and a nonhuman. We note, finally, that unlike other Bantu languages, there is no evidence that the BEN should optimally ("in the unmarked case") precede the ACC. Instead, the only relevant consideration for determining the ordering of nonsubject nouns is animacy.[5]

## 3. Cliticization

As seen in (4) above, one of the most widely cited criteria for establishing DO status is the ability of a noun to be "replaced" by a corresponding clitic pronoun in the object marker (OM) infix slot in the verbal complex. In Bantu, there are potentially four different ways in which an OM clitic can arise in discourse, all of them attested in Sesotho:

(i) ***Pronominalization:*** When a noun is "replaced" by a pronoun, the latter typically surfaces in the OM position immediately preceding the verb stem, e.g. ke-a-mo-bóna 'I see him' (lit. I-PRES-him-see).

(ii) ***Left-dislocation:*** When a noun is left-dislocated, Bantu languages usually require a "copy pronoun" in the verbal complex, e.g. ngoaná ke-a-mo-bóna 'the child, I see him' (lit. child I-PRES-him-see).

(iii) ***Relativization:*** Many Bantu languages require a "resumptive pronoun" when relativizing on a noun, e.g. ngoaná éò ké-mo-bóná-ǹg 'the child that I see' (lit. child that I-him-see-REL).

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[5]The situation is nearly the opposite in other Bantu languages, e.g. Shona [Hawkinson and Hyman 1974], Logooli [Rachel Angogo, personal communication]. In these languages the order of the two nouns is flexible *only* if no ambiguity results. Thus, if both nouns were human, the BEN would have to precede the ACC. In Logooli, if the BEN is human and the ACC nonhuman, both orders are possible; if, on the other hand, the BEN is nonhuman and the ACC human, only the order ACC-BEN is possible.

(iv) *Object agreement:* Some Bantu languages allow an OM clitic to co-occur with its coreferential noun after the verb.[6] In Sesotho only the "long" form of the present tense allows this object agreement, e.g. ke-a-mo-bóna ngoaná 'I see the child' (lit. I-PRES-him-see child).

Except for the northwestern extremity of the zone, all Bantu languages use the OM clitic for the purpose of pronominalization. Most, if not all, of the same languages allow or require the OM clitic when its coreferential noun is left-dislocated. Bantu languages split on the question of whether an OM clitic is required when an object is relativized, while relatively fewer Bantu languages make use of true object agreement. The reason for distinguishing the above four *functions* of the OM clitic is that, in Sesotho, the ability to obtain cliticization depends upon the way in which the clitic comes into being. Since it is restricted to one tense only, we shall not discuss object-agreement any further in this study.

We begin by left-dislocating in (6) and relativizing in (7) each noun in our original test sentences.

(6) Left dislocation

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| a. | ngoaná ke-mó-phehétsé lijó | child I-him-cooked/APP food |
| | lijó ke-lí-phehétsé ngoaná | food I-it-cooked/APP child |
| b. | mokété ke-ó-phehétsé lijó | feast I-it-cooked/APP food |
| | lijó ke-lí-phehétsé mokéte | food I-it-cooked/APP feast |
| c. | baná ke-ba-bítselítsé mokéte | children I-them-called/APP feast |
| | *mokété ke-o-bítselítsé baná | feast I-it-called/APP children |

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[6] Object-agreement usually marks the object noun as given or definite, e.g. in Sukuma, where there is a curious interplay between object-agreement and the presence vs. absence of the preprefix [Herman Batibo, personal communication]. In some Bantu languages, e.g. Swahili, Nyakyusa [Duranti 1977], object-agreement is obligatory with human object nouns. It is these object-agreeing languages which tend also to restrict DO properties to a single argument in the sentence. Note, also, that many Bantu languages have a process of right-dislocation, e.g. Haya [Byarushengo, Hyman, and Tenenbaum 1976, Tenenbaum 1977a,b]. In such utterances the clitic OM is to be identified as a pronoun, rather than as an object-agreement marker (cf. Byarushengo and Tenenbaum [1976]).

(6) cont.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| d. | morena ke-mo-bítselítsé baná | chief I-him-called/APP children [A] |
| | baná ke-ba-bítselítsé morena | children I-them-called/APP chief [A] |

(7) Relativization

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| a. | ngoaná éò ké-mó-phehétséǹg lijó | child that I-him-cooked/APP food |
| | lijó tséò ké-lí-phehétséǹg ngoaná | food that I-it-cooked/APP child |
| b. | mokété óò ké-ó-phehétséǹg lijó | feast that I-it-cooked/APP food |
| | lijó tséò ké-lí-phehétséǹg mokéte | food that I-it-cooked/APP feast |
| c. | baná báò ké-ba-bítselítséǹg mokéte | children that I-them-called/APP feast |
| | *mokété óò ké-o-bítselítséǹg baná | feast that I-it-called/APP children |
| d. | morena éò ké-mo-bítselítséǹg baná | chief that I-him-called/APP children [A] |
| | baná báò ké-ba-bítselítséǹg morena | children that I-them-called/APP chief [A] |

The sentences in (6) and (7) confirm our earlier observation that only mokéte 'feast' in the (c) sentences is not a DO. Thus, cliticization by left-dislocation and by relativization yields the same results as cliticization by pronominalization in (5).

A complicated situation arises, however, when we attempt to subjectivize one noun and pronominalize the other, as seen in (8).

(8) Subjectivization of one noun, pronominalization of the other

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| a. | ngoaná ó-li-phéhetsoe | child he-it-was-cooked/APP |
| | *lijó lí-mo-phéhetsoe | food it-him-was-cooked/APP |
| b. | *mokété ó-li-phéhetsoe | feast it-it[food]-was-cooked/APP [R][7] |
| | *lijó lí-o-phéhetsoe | food it-it[feast]-was-cooked/APP |
| c. | *baná bá-o-bítsélitsoe | children they-it-were-called/APP [R] |
| | *mokété ó-ba-bítsélitsoe | feast it-them-was-called/APP |
| d. | ?morena ó-ba-bítsélitsoe | chief he-them-was-called/APP [A] |
| | ?baná bá-mo-bítsélitsoe | children they-him-were-called/APP [A] |

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[7] The symbol [R] indicates that a reversed meaning is obtained, e.g. 'the feast was cooked for it [the food]' in (8b).

In (8) we observe that when one noun is subjectivized and the other pronominalized (as a clitic), only the first sentence in (8a) is completely acceptable. In order for such a structure to evolve it must be the case that the subject of the passivized verb is human. The first sentence in (8a) is distinctively less acceptable if 'goat' is substituted for 'child'. This explains the unacceptability of the second sentence in (8a) and the two sentences in (8b). The unacceptability of the two sentences in (8c) can be attributed to the fact that mokéte 'feast' is not a DO and therefore cannot appear in either the subject or OM position in general. The two sentences in (8d) are marginally acceptable. Bantu languages differ in their treatment of these: for some what is important is that the subject be human, i.e. highest in the personal hierarchy; for others what is important is that there be an animacy ***differential*** between the subject and the OM clitic pronoun, where the subject is higher in animacy than the object. The questionable status of these sentences seems to indicate an awareness of both strategies: the fact that the subject is human argues in favor, while the fact that the OM clitics are ***equally*** human argues against the acceptability of (8d). If we substitute first or second person subject pronouns for 'chief' and 'child', (8d) becomes more acceptable, since a new differential along the "animacy" scale is created. Conversely, if we substitute first or second person ***object*** pronouns for 'them' and 'him', both sentences in (8d) become entirely ungrammatical.

What is important for our discussion of cliticization is that the acceptability of some of the sentences in (8d) is enhanced when the OM clitics arise through left-dislocation, in (9), or relativization in (10).

(9) Subjectivization of one noun, left-dislocation of the other

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| a. | lijó ngoaná ó-li-phéhetsoe | food child he-it-was-cooked/APP |
| | *ngoaná lijó lí-mo-phéhetsoe | child food it-him-was-cooked/APP |
| b. | *lijó mokété ó-li-phéhetsoe | $food_i$ $feast_j$ $it_j$-$it_i$-was-cooked/APP |
| | *mokété lijó lí-o-phéhetsoe | $feast_i$ $feast_j$ $it_j$-$it_i$-was-cooked/APP |
| c. | *mokété baná bá-o-bítsélitsoe | feast children they-it-were-called/APP [R] |
| | *baná mokété ó-ba-bítsélitsoe | children feast it-them-was-called/APP |
| d. | baná morena ó-ba-bítsélitsoe | children chief he-them-was-called/APP [A] |
| | morena baná bá-mo-bítsélitsoe | chief children they-him-were-called/APP [A] |

(10) Subjectivization of one noun, relativization of the other

a. lijó tséò ngoaná á-lí-phehétsoéǹg — food that child he-it-was-cooked/APP
*ngoaná éò lijó lí-mó-phehétsoéǹg — child that food it-him-was-cooked/APP

b. *lijó tséò mokété ó-lí-phehétsoéǹg — food$_i$ that feast$_j$ it$_j$-it$_i$-was-cooked/APP
*mokété óò lijó lí-ó-phehétsoéǹg — feast$_i$ that food$_j$ it$_j$-it$_i$-was-cooked/APP

c. mokété óò baná bá-ó-bítselítsoéǹg — feast that children they-it-were-called/APP
*baná báò mokété ó-bá-bítselítsoéǹg — children that feast it-them-was-called/APP

d. baná báò morena á-bá-bítselítsoéǹg — children that chief he-them-was-called/APP [A]
morena éò baná bá-mó-bítselítsoéǹg — chief that children they-him-were-called/APP [A]

Comparing (8) vs. (9) and (10) we note the same ungrammaticality of the second sentence in (a) and (c), as well as the two sentences in (b). The two differences observed are: (i) the sentences in (d), which were questionable in (8), are acceptable in both (9) and (10); and (ii) the first sentence of (c), which was unacceptable in (8), and is unacceptable in (9), is acceptable in (10). In other words, when the coreferential nouns are present, and the OM clitic is created through left-dislocation or relativization, the animacy constraint is relaxed in the (d) sentences. Also, mokéte 'feast', which could not cliticize through pronominalization in (8c), nor through left-dislocation in (9c), *can* cliticize through relativization in (10c). There appear to be two ways to interpret this last fact: (i) cliticization remains a DO property, in which case (under certain circumstances not fully understood) a non-DO *becomes* a DO when it is relativized; or (ii) cliticization is not a DO property *except* in so far as the clitic is a *true* pronoun. While it would be instructive to compare the strategies of a number of Sesotho speakers, it appears that one important variable in determining the acceptability of an utterance is whether an antecedent noun cooccurs or not with its corresponding clitic. This would predict the difference between (8) vs. (9) and (10), but *not* the difference between the first sentences of (9c) and (10c). Thus, in addition to the presence vs. absence of the antecedent noun, we may have to establish a hierarchy of cliticizability, depending upon the means by which the clitic is produced.[8]

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[8] A most convincing case involving object-agreement was pointed out to

Before leaving this section we should note, however, that the ability of a noun to be pronominalized does not in itself imply that that argument is a DO. This is because in addition to the OM clitics, there exists a series of "absolute pronouns" [Doke 1957:107ff], one of whose functions is to provide a pronoun when a clitic OM is not possible. Since, unlike certain other Bantu languages, there is only one OM clitic slot, an absolute pronoun must be used if both nonsubject nouns in the test sentences are pronominalized, as seen in (11).

(11) Pronominalization of both nouns

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| a. | ke-mó-phehétsé tsoná | I-him-cooked/APP it |
| | ke-lí-phehétsé eená | I-it-cooked/APP him [A] |
| b. | ke-lí-phehétsé ooná | I-it[food]-cooked/APP it[feast] |
| | ke-ó-phehétsé tsoná | I-it[feast]-cooked/APP it[food] |
| c. | ke-ba-bítselítsé ooná | I-them-called/APP it[feast] |
| | *ke-o-bítselítsé boná | I-it[feast]-called/APP them |
| d. | ke-mo-bítselítsé boná | I-him-called/APP them [A] |
| | ke-ba-bítselítsé eená | I-them-called/APP him [A] |

In (11) we see that it is only the second sentence of (11c) which cannot allow two pronouns (since mokéte 'feast' is not a DO). A second environment where absolute pronouns substitute for ungrammatical clitic pronouns is in the following sentences corresponding to those in (8):

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us by Herman Batibo [personal communication]. In his language, Sukuma, the following sentence is ungrammatical:

(i) *a-ka-bii-nhwá 'he was given them [human]'
he-past-them-was given

This shows that a passive construction will not tolerate a human pronoun in the OM slot. However, as seen in (ii),

(ii) a-ka-bii-nhwá abaana 'he was given the children'

the sentence is acceptable if the preprefixed (=[+determined]) object noun cooccurs with the OM clitic. What could not cliticize as a pronoun *can* cliticize as an agreement marker!

(12) Sentences from (8) with absolute pronouns

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| a. | ?ngoaná ó-phehétsoé tsoná | child he-was-cooked/APP it |
| | lijó lí-phehétsoe eená | food it-was-cooked/APP him |
| b. | ?mokété ó-phehétsoé tsoná | feast it-was-cooked/APP it[food] [R] |
| | lijó lí-phehétsoé ooná | food it-was-cooked/APP it[feast] |
| c. | baná bá-bítselítsoé ooná | children they-were-called/APP it |
| | *mokété ó-bítselítsoé eená | feast it-was-called/APP them |
| d. | morena ó-bítselítsoé boná | chief he-was-called/APP them [A] |
| | baná bá-bítselítsoé eená | children they-were-called/APP him [A] |

Except for the second sentence of (12c), those sentences which were ungrammatical (or questionable) with a clitic pronoun in (8) are now acceptable with the absolute pronoun (the questionable status of the first sentence of (12b) apparently is due to the tendency to assign a reversed meaning 'the feast was cooked for it'). Note that the fully grammatical first sentence of (8a) is now questionable when an absolute pronoun is used instead of the correct clitic pronoun. A general feature of Sesotho is that when a clitic pronoun is acceptable, the corresponding sentence with an absolute pronoun in its place is questionable.[9]

Since pronominalization is possible without cliticization, and since cliticization is possible without pronominalization, we are left with the conclusion that if cliticizazion is to serve as a criterion for DO status in Sesotho, we must further stipulate that *the clitic must be a pronoun.* What this means about the nature of the DO will be discussed in section 5.

## 4. Affected Possessors

One of the perplexing issues arising from the data presented above concerns the non-object status of mokéte 'feast' in the (c) sentences. Recall that the test sentence (2c) has a nonhuman BEN and a human ACC. We know from test sentence (2a), which has a human BEN and a nonhuman ACC, that a verb can in principle have two DO's, one of them human and the other nonhuman. But in order for it to do so, it must be the case that

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[9]Doke [1957:108] indicates that the absolute pronouns can at least in some cases be substituted for the clitic pronouns with an "emphatic" function.

the BEN is human and the ACC nonhuman, rather than the reverse. The question is why?

After investigating a number of constructions in the language, we have determined that test sentence (a) aligns itself with such double object verbs as 'to give', while test sentence (c) has its grammatical properties mirrored in constructions involving an "affected" possessor. As shown by Voeltz [1976], these involve cases where there is a part-whole relationship between two arguments and, it is important to add, where the whole is affected by an action performed on the part (cf. Hyman [1977]). Our test sentence here will be 'I broke the child's arm', where my breaking the arm necessarily affects the child as a whole (cf. 'I broke the child's stick', where the stick can be broken without affecting the child). In (13), as seen before, the human noun must precede the nonhuman noun.

(13) a. ke-robílé ngoaná letsóho I-broke child arm
b. *ke-robílé letsóhó ngoaná I-broke arm child

(Note that the -ílé ending is the past tense marker and does *not* contain the applicative extension.) The normal possessive construction in (14)

(14) ke-robílé letsóhó lá ngoaná I-broke arm of child

implies that the child is not affected by the breaking of the arm and thus communicates that the arm which was in his possession was not part of his body, e.g. he found a stray arm, brought it to me, and I broke it--thus without the action of arm-breaking having any effect on the child. When there is no part-whole relationship (and it is therefore harder to affect the possessor by acting on his possession), only the possessive construction is possible, as seen in (15):

(15) a. ke-robílé lekala lá ngoaná I-broke branch of child
b. *ke-robílé ngoaná lekala I-broke child branch

What is important for our study of the object relation is that letsóho 'arm' is, like mokéte 'feast' in test sentence (c), not a DO. This is seen in (16), where 'arm' does not subjectivize, and in (17), where it does not cliticize.

(16) a. ngoaná ó-robíloé letsóho — child he-was-broken arm
b. *letsóhó lé-robíloé ngoaná — arm it-was-broken child

(17) a. ke-mó-robílé letsóho — I-him-broke arm
b. *ke-lé-robílé ngoaná — I-it-broke child

As in (8c), both (18a) and (18b) are ungrammatical when one noun is subjectivized and the other cliticized as a pronoun:[10]

(18) a. *ngoaná ó-le-róbiloe — child he-it-was-broken
b. *letsóhó lé-mo-róbiloe — arm it-him-was broken

Corresponding exactly to the sentences in (9c) and (10c) are those in (19), where one noun is left-dislocated and the other cliticized as a pronoun, and (20), where one noun is relativized and the other cliticized as a pronoun.

(19) a. *letsóhó ngoaná ó-le-róbiloe — arm child he-it-was-broken
b. *ngoaná letsóhó lé-mo-róbiloe — child arm it-him-was-broken

(20) a. letsóhó léò ngoaná á-lé-robíloéǹg — arm that child he-it-was-broken
b. *ngoaná éò letsóhó lé-mó-robíloéǹg — child that arm it-him-was-broken

We therefore conclude that whatever is responsible for the non-DO status of mokéte 'feast' in test sentence (c) must also be responsible for the non-DO status of letsóho 'arm' in the above examples.[11] Before attempting

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[10]Unlike the first sentence of (12c) the corresponding affected object constructions with absolute pronouns are for some reason still unacceptable:

(i) *ngoaná ó-robíloé loná — child-he-was-broken it
(ii) *letsóhó lé-robíloé eená — arm it-was-broken him

[11]Further evidence for a relationship between test sentence (c) and the affected object construction is seen from Logooli [Rachel Angogo, personal communication]. In that language, a dialect of Luhya, both nouns in the corresponding sentences can subjectivize and cliticize (although the human ACC and affected object must precede the nonhuman BEN and possessed part, respectively). Of all of the Bantu languages we have looked at, Logooli seems to be the least affected by animacy considerations. Logooli can even freely cliticize human pronouns when a nonhuman argument is subjectivized:

(i) ichú'kúríá cha-m̀̀-deekerwâ — food it-him-was-cooked/APP
(ii) isúguukú 'yá-m̀̀-'rááŋgirwâ — feast it-him-was-cooked/APP

a synthesis of the data presented thus far, let us note in (21) that the "affected" possessor need not be human.

(21) a. ke-robílé sefáté lekala I-broke tree branch
b. ke-robílé lekala lá seláte I-broke branch of tree

In (21a) sefáté 'tree' appears as the affected possessor, indicating that the branch-breaking has affected the tree. This sentence is thus most aptly translated 'I broke the branch off the tree'. When the tree is not affected, e.g. the branch had already been severed from the tree before I broke it, the ordinary possessive construction is used. Thus, sentence (21b) is best translated 'I broke the branch of the tree' or even 'I broke the tree-branch' (generic).

5. Summary and Conclusion

To summarize, we have observed the following:

(i) There is a constraint against having a nonhuman noun precede a human noun after the verbal complex.

(ii) When the BEN and ACC are of equal animacy, both word orders are permitted, with potential ambiguity in each case.

(iii) When the humanness/nonhumanness of a BEN and ACC are varied, all nouns can subjectivize and cliticize *except* the BEN, if the BEN is nonhuman and the ACC is human.

(iv) If one argument is subjectivized and the other cliticized as a pronoun, the optimal situation obtains when the resulting subject is human and the cliticized pronoun nonhuman.

(v) In certain constructions such as that described in (iv), cliticization is facilitated if arising out of left-dislocation or relativization, rather than pronominalization.

(vi) An absolute pronoun follows the verbal complex if either (a) there is already a clitic occupying the OM slot, or (b) the antecedent noun does not have access to cliticization.

(vii) Possessed parts do not subjectivize or cliticize in affected possessor constructions and resemble the nonhuman BEN described in (iii).

From the above observations we conclude that arguments higher in the personal hierarchy, e.g. human vs. nonhuman arguments, are accorded more DO properties than arguments lower in the personal hierarchy. Thus, human

nouns obligatorily precede non-human nouns and have greater access to subjectivization and cliticization.

At this point we would like to suggest that the properties said to characterize DO's are accorded to those non-subject arguments which are the most *prominent* in discourse, either as the syntacticization of universal tendencies, or, if the language permits flexibility, as warranted by a particular discourse situation. Human beings necessarily have greater prominence over nonhumans, since they typically bring about, receive, and are the beneficiaries of actions. Thus, in Sesotho, the prominent position immediately following the verbal complex is reserved for a human noun (if present in the utterance).

Addressing ourselves to (iii), we note that there is a tendency for the BEN to be human and the ACC to be nonhuman. Thus, in terms of both the personal and case hierarchies, the BEN should be accorded grammatical properties commensurate with its relative prominence over the ACC. Thus, it is not surprising that Bantu chooses, via the applicative extension -il/el- , to orient the verb towards the BEN (and, in some Bantu languages, away from the ACC, which may receive few DO properties). As a result of this benefactively oriented verb-marking, the human BEN is "secure" enough in its grammatical status in (8a) to allow a nonhuman ACC to cooccur as a clitic pronoun. On the other hand, when the BEN and ACC are equal in animacy, instead of the BEN remaining higher in grammatical status, in Sesotho (and other Bantu languages) a "stand-off" situation arises with both arguments being DO-like, but with neither being too secure in its objecthood. This is seen in (8b), where neither subjectivized argument is secure enough in grammatical status to permit a cooccurring clitic pronoun. Finally, consider the case of the nonhuman BEN and the human ACC. The verb is oriented toward the BEN but on universal grounds, the human argument is more prominent. Because Sesotho is so much more animacy-oriented than case-oriented, it balks the BEN verb-marking and gives all to the ACC. However, because the human ACC is not singled out by the grammar to receive the grammatical correlates of discourse-prominence, (either by verb-marking or in the lexicon), it is necessary to denude the BEN of all grammatical status. The (c) sentences in the data cited throughout this study all point to the non-DO status of this nonhuman BEN.

The same can be said about the nonhuman possessed part in section 3. Here, the fact that the possessor of a body (or tree) part is *affected* results in its being "promoted" to prominent grammatical status. In fact, as argued by Hyman [1977], in the affected possessor construction, the relative statuses of the possessor and the possessed are ***inverted***.[12] When we say in Sesotho 'I broke the tree the branch', it is the tree which is prominent. Unlike the (c) sentences, the prominence is not due to the animacy differential between the two arguments, but rather to the ***affectedness*** of the possessor, i.e. the tree.

To be a DO therefore ***means*** something in Bantu. Whether it be for its animacy, its case, or its determinedness (cf. section 1), a DO in Bantu is more prominent, affected, or topical than a non-DO. We have seen in a number of examples above the need to address the animacy factor in determining grammatical status. To maintain the DO as a notion devoid of meaning or discourse function makes it difficult to explain why animacy should play any role at all in determining the grammatical status of an argument. We have seen that the various arguments of a verb must be hierarchized on the basis of three scales. We have also seen that the grammatical status of one argument may crucially depend on the nature or presence vs. absence of another argument or arguments. Finally, we have experienced some difficulty in applying the cliticization criterion for DO status. In crucial examples where there are rival claims to the OM clitic position, the resulting sentences are hard to evaluate.[13] This

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[12]In both Kinyarwanda [Kimenyi 1976] and Logooli [Rachel Angogo, personal communication] the affected possessor becomes a DO without the possessed part losing its DO status. An analysis involving inversion of grammatical relations would thus not be appropriate for these languages.

[13]Such sentences involve either (i) one argument pronominalized, the other left-dislocated; (ii) one argument pronominalized, the other relativized; or (iii) one argument left-dislocated and the other relativized. Since each such sentence has *two* arguments vying for the clitic OM position, it would be instructive to submit our test sentences (2a-d) to these operations and determine from a number of speakers a hierarchy for accessibility to clitic object position.

raises the important question of how much of the foregoing is characteristic of all Sesotho, and how much should be attributed to the discourse strategies of the two speakers we were able to consult. Until a systematic study involves the participation of a large number of native speakers, we cannot know whether the variations found in the diverse Bantu languages are characteristic of grammatical differences among languages or strategic differences among speakers. For what we have investigated so far we are only able to say: (i) that cliticization can occur without pronominalization; (ii) that pronominalization can occur without cliticization; and (iii) what occurs as a clitic pronoun can also be the subject of a corresponding passive. Whether subjectivization and clitic pronominalization constitute a test for direct objecthood may simply be a terminological problem. What is clear is that both the properties generally used to establish objecthood and the factors influencing accessibility to these properties find their *raison d'être* in the semantics and pragmatics of communication.

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