

The Object Marking Domain and the Classification of Bantu Languages

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(BOOM)

Introduction

Longstanding question: Is the object marker an agreement affix or an incorporated pronoun?

- This has perhaps been one of the major concerns among linguists (Bresnan & Mchombo 1987, Riedel 2009, Baker 2008, Henderson 2006, Zeller 2014).

Varied answers:

- Bresnan and Mchombo (1987) use object marking in Wh-contexts as a diagnostic for pronoun/agreement distinction. The main idea being that if object marking is possible in such contexts, then the language shows agreement, and if it is excluded, then the OM is pronominal.

Cont...

- Riedel (2009) argues against using Wh-contexts to mark syntactic status of the OM on the basis of data from Swahili (G42), Sambaa (G23) and Haya (D/J20).

Cont...

- The core point in her analysis is that patterns in wh contexts are quite inconsistent across languages and mainly reflect subtle differences in feature composition other than syntactic status. (see Henderson 2006, Zeller 2014, Jenneke 2016, Marten and Kula, 2007, Diercks & Sikuku 2015 for varied discussions on both theoretical and empirical differences in the object marking domain).

This talk:

- Maintains that the behaviour of the OM is crucial in distinguishing Bantu languages more consistently contrary to Riedel's arguments. I argue that this consistency can only be achieved if a more predictive approach is taken in relation to the patterns inherent in the parameters of object marking, as discussed in, for example, Marten & Kula (2007), Riedel (2009).

Objectives:

- Highlight the predictive approach in dealing with OM based classification
- Revisit the OM based classification of Bantu languages by discussing patterns in different parameters on the basis of data from languages whose OM behaviour is currently less understood. (Ekegusii (E31), Kikamba (E55), Kitaita/Kidawida (E74), Oluwanga (E32) and Chidigo(E73)).
- Point out implications to theories of object marking.

Road Map

- Introduction
- Predicting Patterns
- The parameters
- Theoretical Implications
- Conclusions

2. Predicting Patterns

- **Questions:** *To what extent are the variations identified in different languages systematic and therefore predictable?*
- *What are the implications of the variations to the classification of Bantu languages?*

Examples

1. Wekesa a-(***mu**)-p-a o-mu-aana **Lubukusu**
Wekesa 1SM-1OM-hit-FV 1-1-child
Wekesa hit the child
2. Juma a-li-(***m**)-pig-a m-toto. **Kiswahili**
Juma 1SM-TNS-1OM-hit-FV 1-child
Juma hit the child
3. Peter n-u-**(mu)**-endet-e **Mary** **Kikamba**
Peter FOC-1SM-1OM-like Mary
Peter likes Mary

Note:

- Lubukusu and Kiswahili differ systematically on two parameters: OM +Object NP is possible and is obligatory (with human NPs) in Kiswahili, but impossible in Lubukusu. In the literature, this distinction represents the two way dichotomy between OM as agreement and OM as pronominal, respectively.

Cont...

- **However** the Kikamba data in (3) does not fit neatly in a two way classification mainly because it displays characteristics of both types. This problem has been the subject of debate, and in addressing it, several linguists, notably, Bresnan & Mchombo (1987), Riedel (2009), Zeller (2014), (2016) suggest different solutions, including but not limited to:

Cont...

- Dislocation; if doubling is not obligatory then the lexical NP is VP external.
- Behaviour in relative clauses; If the OM obligatorily doubles an NP in relative clauses, then the language shows agreement.
- Doubling in Wh-context: Agreement languages show object marking

Cont...

- (A)symmetry relations: Non-doubling languages are also symmetrical
- Type of movement; A-bar vs A-movement in relative clauses (Zeller 2014).
- Temporal adjunct/DP ordering

A related approach:

- but with more focus on common patterns across different languages derived from the behaviour in related parameters, I show that:
- Predictions can be made on what other parameters apply in any given language once the initial doubling parameter is established, and that instead of two language types, it is necessary to have an intermediate class feeding into the first two on the basis of shared patterns.

Doubling Parameter:

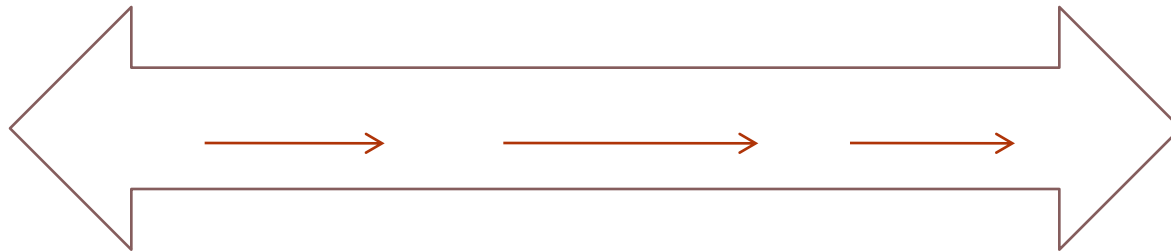
- All languages with doubling select NPs based on the common animacy hierarchy with variations based on specificity/definiteness.

Animacy Hierarchy

-HUMAN

ANIMATE

INANIMATE



-Definite → **Indefinite**

-Specific → **Non-specific**

- e.t.c.

Related Hierarchy

- Riedel (2009: 52) proposes a similar pattern based on cut-off points for Sambaa, Nyaturu, Ruwund, and Swahili:
- first/second person pronouns > proper names (Sambaa) > definite human common noun (Nyaturu) > specific human common noun (Ruwund) > non-specific human common noun > non-human animate common noun (Swahili) > inanimate common noun

Lesson

- Languages will defer on how low they can go to select NPs, but will almost always select the NPs high up the hierarchy first.
- If languages X, Y allow obligatory doubling, then it will not be surprising if both do this with human/definite/specific NPs first and may vary on which other NPs in the hierarchy are included.
- From the literature, Kiswahili will have a more extended domain than, say, Sambia.

3. The Parameters

A. NP Doubling: In examples 4, 5 and 6, below, the OM is obligatory, optional and ungrammatical respectively.

4. Juma a-na-*(**m**)-pend-a Maria

Juma 1SM-TNS-1OM-like-FV Maria

Juma likes Mary

Kiswahili

5. Peter n-a(**mu**)-anchet-e Mary

Peter FOC-1SM-1OM-like-FV Mary

Peter likes Mary

Ekegusii

Cont...

6. Wekesa a-(***mu**)-siim-a Nanjala

Peter 1SM-1OM-like-FV mary

Wekesa likes Nanjala

Lubukusu

Three Types

- **Type 1**- Obligatory doubling (Kiswahili, Sambia, Kidawida)
- **Type 2**- Non-obligatory doubling (Haya, Chichewa, Kikamba, Ekegusii, Chidigo, Gikuyu)
- **Type 3**- Ungrammatical doubling (Lubukusu, Kinyarwanda)

See Van der Wal (2016) for related classification

Another Hierarchy:

- **Obligatory** → **Non-obligatory** → **Ungrammatical**

So?

- If a language selects ‘obligatory’ then that language can only either remain at the same point or move down the hierarchy in the behaviour patterns in other parameters.
- It is for example expected that since Ekegusii selects ‘non-obligatory’, then in wh-contexts, it can only either remain at the same point or move lower, but not higher.

Object Marking in Wh- Contexts (Wh questions and Wh clefts):

- Examples 7, 8, 9 and 10 illustrate the available patterns in both simple wh-interrogatives and Wh-clefts in Kiswahili, Kidawida, Ekegusii and Lubukusu respectively.

7. a i) U-na-*(**m**)-ju-a nani?

1SM.2sgl-TNS-1OM-know-FV whom

Whom do you know?

Cont...

ii) U-na-(***ki**)-ju-a nini?

1SM.2sgl-TNS-7OM-know-FV what

What do you know?

b i) Ni nani U-na-*(**m**)-ju-a?

BE who 1SM.2sgl-TNS-1OM-know-FV

Who is it that you know?

ii) Ni nini U-na-(***ki**)-ju-a?

BE who 1SM.2sgl-TNS-7OM-know-FV

What is it that you know?

Kiswahili

Cont...

8. a i) Ko-*(**mu**)-ich-i a-ni?

1SM.2sgl-1OM-know-FV 1Agr-who

Who do you know?

ii) Ko-(**ki**)-ich-i ki-i?

1SM.2sgl-7OM-know-FV 7Agr-what

What do you know?

b i) Ni a-ni ko-*(**mu**)-ich-i

BE 1Agr-who 1SM.2sgl-1OM-know-FV

Who is it that you know?

ii) Ni ki-i ko-(**ki**)-ich-i

BE 7Agr-what 1SM.2sgl-7OM-know-FV

Who is it that you know?

Kidawida

Cont...

9. a i) Ning'o o-(***mo**)-many-et-e
who 1SM.2sgl-1OM-know-TNS-FV
Who do you know?
- ii) Ninki o-(***ki**)-many-et-e
What 1SM.2sgl-7OM-know-TNS-FV
What do you know?
- b i) Ning'o ere o-(***mo**)-many-et-e?
who COMP 1SM.2sgl-1OM-know-TNS-FV
Who do you know?
- ii) Ninki ere o-(***ki**)-many-et-e?
What COMP 1SM.2sgl-7OM-know-TNS-FV
What do you know?

Ekegusii

Cont...

10. a i) O-(***mu**)-many-il-e naanu?

1SM.2sgl-1OM-know-TNS-FV who

Who do you know?

ii) O-(***si**)-many-il-e siina?

1SM.2sgl-7OM-know-TNS-FV 7Agr-what

Who do you know?

b i) Naanu niye o-(***mu**)-many-il-e?

who COMP 1SM.2sgl-1OM-know-TNS-FV

Who is it that you know?

ii) Siina nisyo o-(***si**)-many-il-e?

what 1SM.2sgl-7OM-know-FV

What is it that you know?

Lubukusu

So?

- There is a systematic correlation between language type with the behaviour of the OM in wh contexts.
- In Kiswahili and Kidawida, all type 1 languages, object marking is obligatory in all the Wh-contexts with human Wh-elements.
- There is a difference, however, in the contexts where the Wh-element refers to a non-human antecedent...

Cont...

- In Kiswahili, object marking is ungrammatical in such contexts whereas it is optional in Kidawida.
- I attribute this difference to the fact that in Kiswahili, the wh-word does not agree with any specific noun class (in Kidawida, agreement is required) instead it is universally used in reference to non human antecedents...

Cont...

- Consequently, if we replace it with an agreeing class 7 form *kipi*, the OM then becomes optional, just like in Kidawida
- In Ekegusii and Lubukusu, representing type 2 and 3 languages, object marking in Wh-contexts is ungrammatical.

C. Negative Polarity Items

- According to Riedel (2009) doubling NPI with OM does not necessarily trigger a specific interpretation in both Kiswahili and Sambia.
- The same parameter can be used as a basis for classifying other Bantu languages. The main idea here is to test whether a non-specific interpretation is available with doubling.
Compare....:

Examples

11. Nde-u-(**mu**)-woni-e m-ndu-ongi/ wowose

Neg-1SM-1OM-see 1-person-any

He did not see any person **Kidawida**

12. Ha-ku-*(**mu**)-on-a m-tu yeyote

Neg.1SM-15-1OM-see-FV any

He did not see any person **Kiswahili**

Cont...

13. Ka-ya-(***mu**)-on-a mtu yeyesi

Neg-1SM-1OM-see-FV any

He did not see any person

Chidigo

14, Shi-ya-(***mu**)-lol-a omundu yeyesi tawe

Neg-1SM-1OM-see-FV any Neg

He did not see any person

Luwanga

So?

- In Type 1 languages (Kiswahili and Kidawida), the non-specific reading is still possible even with object marking, although in Kiswahili it is obligatory while in Kidawida it is optional.
- As expected, both type 2 and 3 languages are ungrammatical on a non specific reading. However, the two differ on a specific reading. Whereas the former are grammatical the latter are ungrammatical

D. Relative Clauses

- Since relative clauses have a Wh feature, it is expected that languages with obligatory doubling in assertions, will allow doubling in relative clauses either obligatorily or freely.
- While those with optional doubling will either be optional or ungrammatical.
- Those that disallow such doubling will be ungrammatical, as shown in 15, 16 and 17 respectively.

Examples

15. U-mu-ana ko-*(**m**)-neki-e chuo

1-1-child REL.1SM-1OM-give-FV book

A child that you gave a book to.

Kidawida

16. Mu-ana u-la n-a-(**mu**)-nengi-e i-vuku

1-child Agr-that 1.1sgl-TNS-give-FV 7-book

A child that I gave a book to.

Kikamba

17. O-mu-ana wa-wa(***mu**)-eresy-e e-shitabu

1-1-child REL.1SM.2sgl-1OM-give-FV 7-book

A child that you gave a book to.

Luwanga

Table 1. Object Marking Patterns in Selected Bantu languages

Parameter	Swahili	Dawida	Digo	Gusii	Kamba	Wanga	Bukusu
OM+NP	Oblig	Oblig	Non-oblig	Non-oblig	Non-oblig	Ungram	<u>Ungram</u>
a) Human							
b) Animate	Non-oblig	Non-oblig	Non-oblig	Non-oblig	Non-oblig	Ungram	Ungram
c) Inanimate	Non-oblig	Non-oblig	Non-oblig	Non-oblig	Non-oblig	Ungram	Ungram
Wh-Contexts	Oblig	Oblig	Ungramm	ungramm	Ungramm	ungramm	ungramm
a) Human							
a) Non human	Non-oblig/ungramm	Non-oblig	Ungramm	ungramm	Ungramm	ungramm	ungramm
NPI&Non-specific reading	Oblig	Oblig	Ungramm	ungramm	Ungramm	ungramm	ungramm
Relatives	Oblig	Oblig	Non-oblig	Ungramm	Non-oblig	Ungramm	Ungramm

E. Locative Markers

- Whereas several Bantu languages have locative noun classes, their marking on the verb may or may not follow conventional object marking patterns.
- At least four or more patterns are attested:

Cont...

- ❑ Prefixation only (Swahili, Sambia, Chichewa)
- ❑ Suffixation only
- ❑ Either prefixation or suffixation (Bemba, Haya)
- ❑ Both Prefixation and Suffixation (Lubukusu)
- ❑ No locative marker at all

Preliminary hypothesis

- : Type 1 languages always have locative prefixes while Type 3 always have suffixes. Type 2 languages select either prefixes or suffixes.

Examples

18. Juma a-na-**pa**-ju-a

Juma 1SM-TNS-16LOC-know-FV

Juma knows there

Kiswahili

19. Peter ya-many-a **yo**

Peter 1SM-know-FV 23LOC

Peter knows there.

Luwanga

F. Number of Object Markers

- According to Rugemalira (1997), Bantu languages do not seem to allow more than three pronominal positions on the verb. However, evidence in Kinyarwanda, indicate up to five or six positions (Beaudoin-Lietz et al 2004).
- Is there a correlation between freedom in OM number and language type.
- Preliminary evidence indicates that Type 1 languages are predominantly single object languages

G. (A)symmetry Relations

- Related to the behaviour of objects in double object constructions.
- According to Bresnan and Moshi (1990), Bantu languages are either symmetrical or asymmetrical on the basis of the following tests, stated here in form of questions:

Cont...

- ❖ Which object can be object marked?
- ❖ Which argument can be subject in a passive construction?
- ❖ What is the order of the object arguments?

Cont...

- Kidawida, a type 1 language shows asymmetry behaviour because only the benefactive object can occur IAV and be object marked as shown in 20.

20. a) Peter u-de-**m**-nek-a Mary ma-ua

Peter 1SM-TNS-1OM-give-FV Mary 1-flowers

Peter gave Mary flowers

Cont...

b) *Peter u-de-**m**-nek-a ma-ua Mary

Peter 1SM-TNS-1OM-give-FV 1-flowers Mary

Peter gave flowers to Mary

Cont...

c) *Peter u-de-**ghi**-nek-a Mary ma-ua

Peter 1SM-TNS-6OM-give-FV Mary 1-flowers

Peter gave Mary flowers

d) *Peter u-de-**ghi**-nek-a ma-ua Mary

Peter 1SM-TNS-6OM-give-FV 1-flowers Mary

Peter gave flowers to Mary

Cont...

- On the other hand Lubukusu and Luwanga are symmetrical and non-doubling. Type two languages would then fit in either of these.

(A)Symmetry Vs Doubling

	Type 1 Obligatory	Type 2 Non- obligatory	Type 3 Ungrammatical	Undetermined
Symmetrical	?	Kikamba, Ekegusi	Lubukusu, Luwanga	
Asymmetrical	Kiswahili, Kidawida, Sambaa	Chidigo	?	
Undetermined				

Conclusions

- Object marking domain is a fertile ground for linguists to use in explaining cross linguistic similarities and differences.
- Despite the many variations, more systematic and unified patterns can be identified if one adopted an interrelated approach in parameter setting.
- The interrelatedness should be continuum based on a scale of shared characteristics.

END

Muryo muno khukhundekeresela