

Kristina Riedel

## The Syntax of Object Marking in Sambia:

A comparative Bantu perspective

This thesis investigates the syntax of object marking in Sambia and the Bantu languages in general, with particular focus on Swahili and Haya, as points of comparison. Object marking is approached from the perspective of Minimalist syntax. The central claim is that object marking in Sambia and related languages can be analysed as Agree (in the sense of Chomsky 2000, 2001), with certain modifications. These modifications have implications for the Agree mechanism in general.

Object marking is discussed in the context of a range of syntactic environments: simple affirmative clauses, wh-questions, relative clauses and coordination structures. Based on this broad set of data, it is shown that Bantu languages cannot, as has been proposed, be divided into two types, namely those with object agreement and those with pronominal object marking (Bresnan and Mchombo 1987; Byarushengo et al. 1976, 1977 and Baker 2007). Rather, the Agree analysis can account for the object markings patterns in all languages examined.

It is further shown that Bonet's (1991, 1994) Person Case Constraint (PCC) holds for Bantu. The data discussed strongly support Bonet's distinction between a "weak" and a "strong" PCC, as the languages discussed obey the weak but not the strong version of the PCC. Moreover, the PCC is shown to apply not only to object marking but to all ditransitive constructions in Bantu.

This thesis is of relevance to syntacticians interested in agreement, object marking and the interaction of verbs and objects more generally, and to linguists interested in Bantu syntax, and in particular Sambia, Swahili and Haya.

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