

Amidu, Assibi A. 2009. Matrix Nominal Phrases in Kiswahili Bantu. A Study of their Effects on Argument Syntax. [Grammatical Analyses of African Languages, Volume 34]. Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, Köln. 236 pages; 297 Illustrations; and Index.

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Assibi A. Amidu's contribution is undoubtedly a highly challenging one to the direct study of the Kiswahili Bantu language. Aiming at complementing the existing grammars and monographs of living languages the author intends to illuminate some paradoxes of the Kiswahili syntax and morphology. Having defined this aim he presents a clearly structured monograph to the interested reader, consisting of six chapters, relating to one another.

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The introduction, chapter 1, defines the content-aim of the study, arguing that inclusive syntax and semantic inclusiveness occur in Kiswahili Bantu. Furthermore, attention is drawn to the existing relationship between "lexicality" and "lexicalhood" as well as "phrasality" and "phrasehood" (to quote Amidu's terminology) in the syntax of the language under description. Re-syntacticization resulting in NP crash and NP decomposition/ NP recomposition are also named as phenomena to be examined in the course of the study. The author relies to a large extent on the reader's familiarity with former works and studies on the topic. He therefore loses little time in briefly introducing terminology aforementioned (i.a. "pull weight effect", "trigger-happy agreement"; Amidu 2001, Comrie 2003). Giving many clear and comprehensible examples to illustrate the rich diversity of the question under discussion, namely the agreement of conjunctions within a predicate constituent structure (PC) or a nominal phrase (NP), the author prepares the reader for the complexity and paradox to be discovered as the study proceeds.

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Chapter 2 discusses the decomposition of matrix NPs claiming NP crash. Again the author draws on a wide range of examples to illustrate his hypothesis. Arguing that decomposition may lead to differentiation in matrix NPs, the reader is confronted with sentences which are partly grammatical and partly not (cf. ex. 7, p. 40).

1. *Mtumishi alimtemea mkurugenzi mate ya uso/ *mate ya usoni/ mate usoni.*

The domestic servant spat on the face of the director.

Unfortunately, no other reason is given for the ungrammaticality of the sentence including the associative as well as the locative, than a mother-tongue speaker's preference of the other examples. Furthermore, caution is needed with the claim of grammaticality and the literal translations of other examples (cf. ex. 9, p. 43). Nevertheless, the reader is captivated paragraph for paragraph and is enthused, therefore searching for more information on the point, which he obtains within the course of the discussion.

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Chapter 3 presents examples of the decomposition of coordinate NPs, thereby revealing the emergence of associative object NPs. The reader is introduced to the strategy of attraction, with reference to the aforementioned Pull Weight Effect (Amidu 2001). Subsequently, a very interesting discussion on the reciprocal-associative predicate verb type is presented. In spite of a clear discussion aimed at building one point on the next, the explications seem to become a victim of their abstraction (cf. ex. 2f, p. 73) and therefore rather confusing. It is refreshing for the reader, however, to be given an insight into various sources of examples (e.g. Riwa 1962, Musa 1964 and Muhando 1975) as well as opinions on specific problems concerning the data. Interestingly, the author provides the reader with different rules, according to the level of discussion, which he then illustrates convincingly. He also stresses the differentiation between NP crash and decomposition syntax as well as non-NP crash syntax. In the course of the chapter the NP decomposition of matrix coordinate object NPs also finds mention. Such is illustrated with a sentence as (2; cf. ex. 61, p. 114).

2. *Kama sio wewe uliowagombanisha na mkewe.*

Whether it is not you who made him to quarrel with his wife.

Attention is drawn to the fact that *wewe* is realised overtly in *uliowagombanisha*, the object NP *na mkewe*, however, is not in agreement harmony with the OM {*wa*}. Referring to the context of the example, the author concludes that an object NP crash and decomposition has taken place (cf. p. 114).

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Chapter 4 discusses agreement strategy, syntactic choice and NP decomposition in Kiswahili grammar. The chapter mainly focuses on types of agreement and agreement implications in concordance with the NP. Comrie (1989, 2003) and Corbett (1991, 2000) have formerly drawn attention to agreement strategies, thereby introducing the term "trigger-happy agreement" (Comrie 2003: 315), which Amidu objects in his discussion. The explanation of the question under discussion is well performed, a critical point to be made, however, is that unfortunately, by concentrating on the circumstances of agreement theory, the author copies a source's lexical weakness uncommented (cf. ex. 3-4, 9-14, p. 127-135)

3. *Kiti na mguu wa meza umevunjika.*

The chair and the leg of the table are broken.

Although the use of *mguu* in the given context is possible, it is the leg of human beings and animals which is realised as *mguu*, objects' legs are preferably referred to as *matendegu* in order to differentiate.

Within the chapter the author proceeds to discuss the argumenthood of matrix NPs in predication sentences (Pn-Ss), hereby taking into account that the matrix NP consists of NPs and PCs. A very enlightening explanation follows with interesting agreement-constructions.

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Chapter 5 takes up preceding examples to illustrate multiple argument syntax through agreement marking. The author claims that "agreement markers do not, in most cases, arise from NP decompositions" (p. 155). Furthermore, the author discusses multiple NPs of matrix NPs as concord generator in PCs. For this, he exploits the mobility of certain NPs in the Kiswahili language and also introduces the passive construction as an illustration of agreement marking. In so doing he agrees with Baker's (1988) uniform theta assignment hypothesis, which has already led to extended discussions (Levin 1993, Radford 1997). The discussion of multiple arguments in matrix NPs leads to a deeper insight into the problematic of concord NP relation.

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Finally, chapter 6 gives a historical perspective on coordinate agreement. For this, the author draws examples from Muyaka's poem *Litakapo kukutana*, edited by Hichens (1940). This chapter is extremely interesting and highlights the study of matrix NPs in Kiswahili Bantu. After a complete presentation of the poem with translations the reader is reminded of coordinate NPs in Pn-Ss. In the course of the chapter Muyaka's matrix NPs are excerpted and presented within a discussion on appositive coordinate types, comitative coordinate types and "articulate" coordinate types. The complete chapter presents a climax to the study and is valuable for the final understanding of the hypothesis discussed.

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The monograph is a great contribution to the direct study of the syntax of Kiswahili Bantu. Many examples underline the various aspects of matrix nominal phrases discussed in the study. Few minor points of criticism, however, have to be made at this stage. First, inconsistencies of class-representation in the glossing may confuse the reader, *simba* ('lion'), for example, is referred to as Cl. 1 (p. 15), whereas *bi harusi* ('bride', p. 63) and *kaka* ('brother', p. 85) are referred to as Cl. 9/1. Second, the glossing does not always represent the given example in a 1:1 proportion. Such is the case with the missing Cl. 9 OM in *mtajenga* ('you will build', ex. 63, p. 27) and the missing indication of Cl.1-director for *mkurugenzi* in (ex. 7, p. 40). Furthermore, the spelling and the literal translation of examples is not always convincing (cf. ex. 9, p. 43 and *jongoo* 'millipede', p. 143 ff.). Fourthly, *mradi* (ex. 24, 25a, p. 97) is glossed as 'Cl.3-as long as', the class indication seems unlikely though, as conjunctions usually do not take Class and **miradi tuko na mie*, the plural (Cl. 4) construction, is ungrammatical.

In spite of further points of the aforementioned type and many minor typing mistakes throughout the book, it is an important contribution to the study of Kiswahili Bantu and is definitely worth reading.

<9>

Amidu has convincingly discussed complex paradoxes of matrix nominal phrases and agreement, and has succeeded in combining theory with wit.

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