

Summing up, it is pertinent to say that both publications, so long awaited, deserve the attention of all those who are interested in the verbal art. Not only in Benin and Africa, but all over the world.

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**Assibi Amidu, *Objects and Complements in Kiswahili Clauses - A Study of their Mechanisms and Patterns*. Köln, Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, 2013, 677 pp.**

The book was published as part of series *Grammatical Analyses of African Languages* edited by Wilhelm J.G. Möhlig and Bernd Heine. The Author, renowned for his long interest in Swahili morphology and syntax, once again as expected, raises a point of adequacy of traditional grammatical descriptions to Swahili and Bantu languages in general. The book further advances our knowledge on the subject of transitivity in Swahili, that has been thoroughly discussed in the author's book published already in 2001. This time it centres on the nature of objects and/or complements in Swahili predication-sentences or clauses.

This sizeable book is composed of nine chapters divided further into sections, followed by a bibliography and an index. It comprises Author's thoughts and insights on the interpretations of Swahili language structures as presented in various grammars and dictionaries ever published, and their adequacy for modern linguistic analysis within the framework of empirical grammar.

The first chapter on „transitivity, cognateness and introductory notes“ discusses the nature of transitivity and presents different views adopted in language descriptions. The author challenges the Hopper and Thompson continuum hypothesis and refers to his earlier findings of dual transitivity of predicate verbs in Swahili. His research reveals that verbs cannot be classified as having either transitive or intransitive character, as the same verb may generate both transitive and intransitive patterns. In other words, this bitransitivity means that predicate verbs may project both transitive and intransitive syntax in discourse. He also challenges traditional descriptions of Swahili grammar and points out the unfortunate character of the translational approach that results in inadequate descriptions of the

language. To support the thesis he gives examples of the status of locative nouns in Swahili or the so called 'phrasal verbs' and their treatment in various grammars. The author clearly states that he attempts to present a study on Swahili syntax that is far from adopting descriptions tailored for Indo-European languages.

Chapter two discusses the nature of syntactic constituents in predication sentences or clauses. The author presents six principles of grammar and predication sentence syntax that constitute the framework for proper interpretation of syntactic relations. These are transitivity system, complement system, relativity system, subordinate-main clause dependency, statistically central versus peripheral prototypes, and transitivity function of predicates and their predication sentences. Then the discussion turns towards difficulties in the description of the object or complement in Swahili. The neglect of extended predicates in clause structure analysis and its relevance for the understanding of Swahili syntactic categories is emphasized. The Author focuses his criticism on Ashton's grammar of Swahili published in the 1940's which provides interpretations not suitable anymore for modern description of the language.

In the next chapter – „transitives described as intransitives“ – some more inadequacies of Swahili descriptions are highlighted. The discussion focuses on object NPs that are usually presented as adjuncts or nominal constructions in traditional grammars, already mentioned in the previous chapter. In this attitude, an object is understood simply as a complement of a predicate, and this interpretation is clearly justified in the discussion. The chapter is divided into sections that gradually deal with subordinate versus main clause relationships linked by relativization, idiomatic verbal phrases or phrasal verbs or V + NP complexes, and objecthood from a historic and synchronic perspectives.

Chapter four looks at subject and object transpositions in predication sentences. The author's viewpoint contradicts the application of English topic subject hypothesis to Bantu languages. The notion of symmetric and asymmetric transposition is introduced. The subject and object transposition and the status of AGENT in passive and



reflexive syntax and in active non-reflexive syntax are dealt with in separate sections.

Chapter five is devoted to the verb *-enda* 'go'. It analyzes various constructions that confirm the transitive uses of this predicate verb, thus proving its bitransitivity, and focuses on contexts of specialization that it enters into and how it stimulates new, particularly idiomatic meanings.

Chapter six deals with constructions known as the syntax of passivization. It quotes different views on active versus passive syntax and the role of objects. Once again discussion reveals that a typical English approach is not suitable to Swahili, and it challenges again the adjunct hypothesis and phrasal verb analysis often attributed to some verb-NP complexes. It is presented how the object relativization test allows to set apart objects from complements. Once again evidence is provided that the NP undergoing object relativization must be an object.

The following chapter, seven, proposes a new approach to passivization theory based on the weakness of the theories of passivization and objecthood presented in the previous chapter. Then, in chapter eight, the discussion turns towards the idea of adverbial complements or complement adverbials of predicate verbs and the question whether they exist in Swahili. Again the problem of the translation equivalent approach is raised and its influence on the identification of various subjects and complements as adverbial subjects or adverbial complements. The claim is based on the notion of the noun class system on which Bantu languages operate. Because of it, the complements of predicates are regarded as nominal items since adverbial elements, that lie outside the noun class system, cannot generate agreement concords. The last chapter explores further the function of nominal-predicate phrases and prepositional phrases as subject and object.

In conclusion the book is a main of knowledge on Swahili morphology and syntax. It provides a lot of information that lie beyond the core scope of the book. It gives a solid basis and firm explanations to understanding peculiarities of Swahili grammar. The Author takes the language structure as a starting point for his analysis, and

rejects the use of translational approach that, in his view is totally inadequate in the descriptions of Bantu languages. Throughout the book, the Author provides evidence for how the analysis based on the English translation turns out false and misleading. Furthermore, the Author shows how acknowledgement of variation and diversity without overlooking uniformity in different languages may contribute to writing better universal grammars. Undoubtedly, the book challenges the traditional descriptions of Swahili grammar and should be of interest not only to linguists but lexicographers, language teachers and students as well.

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