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8 Applicative constructions and non-applicative uses of applicative morphology in Tswana (Bantu)

Abstract: This chapter provides a detailed description of applicative constructions in Tswana, and of constructions involving the same morphological marking as applicative constructions, although they do not meet the definition of applicative constructions. Leaving aside an applicative-like use of the causative suffix, Tswana can be analyzed as having a single verbal suffix involved in the marking of applicative constructions. In P-applicative constructions, this suffix licenses applied objects expressing various semantic roles, such as beneficiary, whose only common feature is that they cannot be expressed as oblique phrases in clauses projected by the non-applicative form of the same verb. In X-applicative constructions, the same suffix licenses locative expressions that show no evidence of a change in their morphosyntactic status but express roles other than those they would express with the non-applicative form of the same verb. The same suffix is also found in a construction in which it marks the promotion of instrumental adjuncts to subject role. It also has several uses not related to valency operations: focalization of locative adjuncts, expression of habituality of action at some place and expression of intensity of action. Finally, lexicalized applicatives are common in Tswana.

1. Introduction

This chapter describes applicative constructions and non-applicative uses of applicative morphology in Tswana (aka Setswana, ISO 639-3 tsn, Glottolog tswa 1253), a southern Bantu language spoken in Botswana and South Africa by more than 6 million speakers, whose closest relatives are Pedi and Southern Sotho.¹

Tswana has very productive applicative constructions marked by a verbal suffix *-el*, reflex of the Proto-Bantu reconstructed applicative suffix **-id*. However, the constructions in question do not meet some of the narrow definitions of applicativization that may be found in the literature, and can only be identified as applicative if the latter term is taken in the broad sense suggested in the position paper. Moreover, the suffix *-el* is also found in constructions involving valency operations that cannot be viewed as varieties of applicativization, even if this term is taken in a very broad sense, and in constructions in which its function is not related to valency.²

¹ In Botswana, ethnic Batswana constitute 80% of the population, estimated at 2,3 million (2020). In South Africa, Tswana is dominant in the Northwest Province and in some districts of the Free State Province, and the number of its speakers is estimated at 5 million. Tswana, Pedi and Southern Sotho are so close to each other than, from a strictly linguistic point of view, they should be considered as three varieties of a single language. Pedi is commonly designated as Northern Sotho, but this term is ambiguous, since it is also used with reference to lects (Lobedu, Tswapong, etc.) that, linguistically, are better considered languages distinct from Sotho-Tswana proper.

² Throughout this chapter, Tswana words and sentences are given in broad phonetic transcription. The reason for not using current Tswana orthography is that it is quite misleading in linguistic analysis. The point is that current orthography distinguishes only 5 vowels and does not note tones at all, whereas Tswana has 9 vowel phonemes, and tones are crucial for morphological analyses. Moreover, many morphemes that are unquestionably prefixes (in particular, subject indexes and object indexes) are written as if they were separate words. The tones indicated in this transcription are surface tones (which may be very different from underlying tones, given the complexity of tone realization rules), and the lengthening that affects the penultimate syllable of words in immediate prepausal position is noted explicitly.

The chapter is structured as follows. Section 2 provides the necessary information about the basics of Tswana morphosyntax. Section 3 is a general introduction to the various types of applicative constructions that can be found in Tswana, and a general presentation of the applicative marker *-él*. Section 4 discusses the applicative constructions in which the applied phrase fulfills the syntactic role of object. Section 5 discusses the applicative constructions in which the applied phrase cannot be analyzed as an object. Section 6 is about a valency-related use of *-el* which, however, does not meet the definition of applicativization. Section 7 is devoted to the uses of *-el* that are not related to valency operations. Section 8 is about lexicalized applicatives. Section 9 discusses the question of whether some uses of the causative marker *-is* could be analyzed as applicative-like. Section 10 summarizes the main conclusions.

2. The basics of Tswana morphosyntax

Typologically, Tswana is in almost every respect a typical Bantu language. For an overall presentation of Tswana, see Cole's (1955) reference grammar or Creissels' (2003) sketch grammar.

2.1. Nouns, noun phrases, and locatives

Tswana common nouns consist of a stem and an obligatory prefix expressing number, and number morphology is closely related to the division of nominal lexemes into genders. The gender system of Tswana relies on an inventory of 12 agreement patterns, traditionally referred to as "classes", each of them triggered by a particular subset of noun forms. As a rule, noun forms that trigger the same agreement pattern also share the same prefix, and vice-versa, but this correlation is far from perfect. Some classes (in the sense of agreement patterns) are associated with sets of singular noun forms, others with sets of plural forms, and nominal lexemes can be grouped into genders on the basis of correspondences such as *mò-sádí* (cl. 1) 'woman' / *bà-sádí* (cl. 2) 'women': *mò-sádí* 'woman' triggers class 1 agreement, the corresponding plural *bà-sádí* 'women' triggers class 2 agreement, and consequently, 'woman' as a nominal lexeme belongs to a gender that can be labeled gender 1–2.

In Tswana noun phrases, noun dependents follow their head, and express gender-number agreement with their head.

The attachment of a locative marker to the first word of noun phrases converts them into locative phrases. Locatives optionally combine with one of the locative prepositions *kó* (relative remoteness), *fá* (relative proximity), or *mó* (interiority, contact). Neither locative affixes nor locative prepositions specify the distinction between static location, source of motion, or direction of motion. In contrast to the situation observed in Central Bantu languages, locatives do not have access to the subject function.

2.2. Clause structure

The basic constituent order is *Subject-Verb-Objects-Obliques*. There is no flagging of either subjects or objects, but in independent assertive or interrogative clauses, the verb includes an obligatory subject index representing the single core argument of intransitive verbs and the agent of prototypical transitive verbs (1a). Objects are not obligatorily indexed, but topical objects whose precise description is considered superfluous by the speaker are represented by object indexes inserted between the subject index and the verb stem (1b). Objects can be converted into subjects of passive constructions (1c).³

³ Since the details of nominal morphology are irrelevant in this chapter, in the Tswana examples, noun forms are not segmented, and are just given with a translation reflecting their number value and the indication of the agreement pattern they trigger.

- (1) a. *ɣwàná* *ó-t^hùb-il-é* *mà:í.*
 child(1) sI:cl1-break-PRF-FV eggs(6)
 ‘The child broke the eggs.’
- b. *ó-à-t^hùb-î:l-è.*
 sI:cl1-oI:cl6-break-PRF-FV
 ‘He broke them.’
- c. *màí* *á-t^hùb-il-w-è* *kí* *ɣwà:ná.*
 eggs(6) sI:cl1-break-PRF-PASS-FV by child(1)
 ‘The eggs were broken by the child.’

Tswana is an unproblematic “accusative” language in which the single core argument of intransitive verbs and the agent of prototypical transitive verbs not only share the same coding characteristics, but also consistently align with respect to their behavior in operations such as focalization, questioning, equi-NP deletion, raising, or control. Consequently, there is no inconvenience in discussing Tswana morphosyntax in terms of subjects and objects as grammatical relations identified in Tswana by their indexation properties, rather than in terms of A, S and P.

Tswana does not have a grammatical relation “indirect object” in the sense of a grammatical relation distinct from the grammatical relation “direct object”, whose semantic prototype would be the recipient of verbs of giving, but has very productive multiple-object constructions (used in particular with the verbs of giving) in which the linear order of object NPs is rigidly determined by the Animacy Hierarchy (2a), semantic roles being taken into consideration only if two objects are of equal rank according to the Animacy Hierarchy (for example, beneficiaries precede recipients or causees, causees precede patients, etc.). Each object can be represented by an object index, and all the objects can be indexed simultaneously in the verb form. The order of object indexes is the mirror image of the order of their conominals (2b). In multiple-object constructions, each object can be converted into the subject of a passive construction in which the other objects are maintained in object role (2c–d), and reflexive derivation may encode coreference between the subject and any of the objects (2e–f).

- (2) a. *ɣwàná* *’ó-f-il-é* *’kátsí* *dì:džó.*
 child(1) sI:cl1-give-PRF-FV cat(9) food(10)
 ‘The child gave food to the cat.’
- b. *ɣwàná* *’ó-dí-ì-f-î:l-è.*
 child(1) sI:cl1-oI:cl10-oI:cl9-give-PRF-FV
 ‘The child gave it (the food) to it (the cat).’
- c. *kátsí* *’í-f-il-w-é* *dì:džó.*
 cat(9) sI:cl9-give-PRF-FV food(10)
 ‘The cat was given food.’
- d. *dìdžó* *’dí-f-il-w-é* *’ká:tsì.*
 food(10) sI:cl10-give-PRF-FV cat(9)
 ‘The food was given to the cat.’
- e. *bàt^hò* *bá-ì-p^h-il-é* *nákò* *j-á-χò-í-ákápnê:ts-à.*
 people(2) sI:cl2-REFL-give-PRF-FV time(9) cl9-GEN-INF-oI:cl9-think.about-FV
 ‘The people took the time (lit. gave themselves the time) to think about it.’
- f. *bàt^hò* *bá-ì-p^h-il-é* *ná:χà.*
 people(2) sI:cl2-REFL-give-PRF-FV bush(9)
 ‘The people ran away (lit. ‘gave themselves to the bush).’

As illustrated in (3), valency-increasing derivations may create derived verbs whose coding frame is a two- or even three-object construction.

- (3) a. *lòsíá* ^l*lò-nó-l-é* *mâ:fi.*
 baby(11) sI:cl11-drink-PRF-FV milk(6)
 ‘The baby drank milk.’
- b. *kì-nó-s-íts-é* *lòsíá* *mâ:fi.*
 sI:1SG-drink-CAUS-PRF-FV baby(11) milk(6)
 ‘I made the baby drink milk.’
- c. *kì-nó-s-éd-íts-é* *dìmp^hó* *lòsíá* *mâ:fi.*
 sI:1SG-drink-CAUS-APPL-PRF-FV Dimpho(1) baby(11) milk(6)
 ‘I made the baby drink milk for Dimpho.’
- d. *kì-á-ló-mò-nó-s-éd-î:ts-è.*
 sI:1SG-oI:cl6-oI:cl11-oIcl1-drink-CAUS-APPL-PRF-FV
 ‘I made it drink it for her.’

Combinations of valency-changing derivations resulting in constructions with less than three objects are freely allowed. By contrast, those that would result in four-object constructions are completely ruled out, and there are also apparently arbitrary restrictions with three-object constructions. For example, it is difficult to explain why *fá* ‘give’ lends itself to applicative derivation, but not to causative derivation.

On the use of prepositions to mark various semantic types of obliques, see Creissels (2013). For a general presentation of valency-changing mechanisms, see Creissels (2002).

2.3. Verb morphology

A Tswana verb form consists of a ROOT (irreducible lexical element), an obligatory suffix (the FINAL VOWEL, or simply FINAL), and a variable number of other affixes whose presence depends on a variety of factors, each affix having a fixed position in the template. The root may be immediately followed by derivational suffixes that modify its meaning without altering its valency. Together with the root they constitute the EXTENDED ROOT.⁴

Starting from the extended root as the zero point, the order in which the affixes appear can be described as a sequence of positions numbered from –4 (the leftmost possible position, before subject indexes) to +5 (the rightmost possible position, after the so-called final vowel). Some of the positions may host up to three successive affixes of the same category. Given the topic of this chapter, it is sufficient to indicate the positions in which valency operators can be found:

- The reflexive marker (or middle voice marker) *í* occupies position –1 (immediately before the root), which is also the position occupied by object indexes.
- Causative (*i*)*s* or *J*,⁵ applicative *el*, anticausative *εχ*, *al*, *afal*, *aχal*, *εσεχ*, or *Jεχ*, and reciprocal *an* occupy position +1 (immediately after the extended root).
- The passive marker (*i*)*w* occupies position +3 (immediately before the final vowel).

Position –1 may host up to three successive affixes (three object indexes, or the reflexive marker plus two object indexes), and the same applies to position +1.

3. Introductory remarks on Tswana applicatives

3.1. Tswana applicative constructions and the definition of applicativization

⁴ For a more detailed account of Tswana verb morphology, see Creissels et al. (1997) and Creissels (2006, 2017).

⁵ *J* is an abstract morphological element that can be posited in order to account for consonant alternations analyzable as originating historically from a phonological process of palatalization.

Applicative constructions are sometimes defined as derived constructions in which a participant encoded as an oblique in the base construction is encoded as a direct object (or as P, depending on the theoretical framework). According to this definition, Tswana simply doesn't have applicative constructions, since in all the valency-related uses of the applicative marker *-el*, the phrases it licenses refer to a participant that cannot be encoded at all in a monoverbal construction involving the non-derived form of the verb.

All the applicative constructions found in Tswana are OBLIGATORY APPLICATIVES whose use is just conditioned by the fact that they constitute the only available option for the encoding of a given semantic role in the construction of a given verb, as opposed to optional applicatives whose use may be motivated by restrictions on the access of obliques to operations such as focalization or relativization.

For example, none of the Tswana prepositions can assign the role of beneficiary to its complement, and in contrast to languages such as Eton (Bantu; Van de Velde 2008) or Jóola Fóoñi (Atlantic; Creissels and Voisin, this volume), beneficiaries cannot be encoded as objects without using a special form of the verb. In Tswana, the role of beneficiary expressed in (4b) by the applied object *kítsó* cannot be expressed within the frame of a monoverbal construction whose nucleus would be *-béréká* in its underived form.

- (4) a. *kì-tlàà-bérék-á* *màitsìbò:á.*
 sI:1SG-FUT-work-FV evening(6)
 'I'll work this evening.'
- b. *kì-tlàà-bérék-él-à* *kítsó* *màitsìbò:á.*
 sI:1SG-FUT-work-APPL-FV Kitso(1) evening(6)
 'I'll work for Kitso this evening.'

According to a less restrictive definition of applicatives, which is also found in the literature, an applicative construction is a construction in which a derived verb form assigns the syntactic role of direct object (or P) to a noun phrase (the APPLIED OBJECT) referring to a non-core participant (i.e., to a participant in the event that cannot be coded as a core syntactic term in the construction of the base verb). Some of the constructions discussed in this chapter (for example the construction illustrated in (4b) above) meet this definition, which doesn't put any condition about the possibility of expressing the semantic role expressed by the applied object in clauses whose nucleus is the underived form of the same verb.

However, not all the constructions discussed in this chapter as applicative constructions meet the definition of applicative constructions as constructions including an applied object. Some of them only meet a broader definition such as that put forward in the position paper, encompassing any type of construction in which a derived verb form assigns a grammatical relation OTHER THAN SUBJECT to an NP (the APPLIED PHRASE) representing a non-core participant that could not be coded in the same way (or could not be coded at all) in the construction of the base verb.

Another important property of the constructions analyzed in this chapter is that they may involve applied phrases referring to essential participants in the event denoted by the verb. Such a possibility is left open by the definition put forward in the position paper and adopted in this chapter, but is explicitly excluded by some of the more restrictive definitions of applicativization that can be found in the literature. However, Tswana is typically a language whose description would be considerably (and unnecessarily) complicated if a definition of applicativization excluding applied phrases representing essential participants were adopted.

3.2. The applicative marker *-el*

All the Tswana constructions that meet the definition of applicative constructions adopted in this chapter involve a verbal suffix whose underlying form can be posited as *-el*. Like all the formatives that constitute the verb stem with the exception of the verb root, it is underlyingly toneless, and its

tone varies depending on tone spreading rules whose input is the tone of the root and the tone patterns associated to each individual TAM-polarity form. Depending on the adjacent formatives, *-el* may undergo regular morphophonological processes giving rise to the following allomorphs: *-el* (5a), *-ed* (5b), or *-ets* (5c).⁶

- (5) a. *χà-kí-bà-bérék-ê:l-ì.*
NEG-sI:1SG-oI:cI2-FUT-work-APPL-FV
'I do not work for them.'
- b. *kì-bíl-éd-íts-é* *bàná* *ηâ:kà.*
sI:1SG-call-APPL-PRF-FV children(2) doctor(9)
'I've called the doctor for the children.'
- c. *kì-tlàà-bá-χò-bérék-ís-ê:ts-à.*
sI:1SG-FUT-oI:cI2-oI:2SG-work-CAUS-APPL-FV
'I will make them work for you.'

Moreover, depending on the context, *-ets* may be not only an allomorph of *-el*, as in (4c), but also the result of the fusion of *-el* with the perfect marker *J*,⁷ as in (6).

- (6) *kì-bá-bérék-ê:ts-ì.*
sI:1SG-oI:cI2-work-APPL-PRF-FV
'I've worked for them.'

As illustrated by example (7), Tswana has double-applicative constructions with two successive occurrences of *-el* in the verb form and two applied phrases expressing two distinct roles (in (7), *ìj* 'what' expressing the role of cause/purpose, and *kítsó* expressing the role of beneficiary).

- (7) *ò-lìm-èl-èl-à* *ìj* *'kítsó* *'ts'hì:mò?*
sI:2SG-plough-APPL-APPL-FV what Kitso(1) field(9)
'Why are you ploughing the field for Kitso?'

By contrast, constructions with more than two applied phrases and more than two occurrences of *-el* in the verb form are impossible, although the variety of semantic roles that can be expressed via applicative derivation is such that it would not be very difficult to imagine the possibility of such constructions.

3.3. Non-applicative uses of the applicative marker *-el*

The suffix *-el* is the only possible marker of applicative constructions in Tswana, but it also has uses that cannot be analyzed as instances of applicativization, even if this term is taken in a relatively broad sense. For example, in (8b), *-el* licenses an applied object referring to a beneficiary, but in (8c), the same suffix marks the focalization of a locative phrase expressing the localization of the event, without any evidence of a change in valency. (8d) shows that both uses of *-el* may coexist in a construction whose nucleus is a verb form including two successive occurrences of *-el*.

- (8) a. *dzísó* *ó-nè* *à-sw-á* (*mó sifápáánò:-j*).
Jesus(1) sI:cI1-AUX sI:cI1-die-FV LOC cross(7)-LOC
'Jesus died (on a cross).'

⁶ The vowel lengthening observed in (5a), (5c), and (6) is due to the general rule of prepausal lengthening mentioned in Footnote 2 above.

⁷ The morphophoneme *J* (see Footnote 5 above) occurs not only as one of the two allomorphs of the causative marker *-is* ~ *-J*, but also as one of the two allomorphs of the perfect marker *-il* ~ *-J*.

- b. *dzísó ó-nè à-rí-sw-ê:l-à.*
 Jesus(1) sI:c11-AUX sI:c11-oI:1PL-die-APPL-FV
 ‘Jesus died for us.’
- c. *dzísó ó-nè à-sw-él-à mó sifápáánò:-h̃.*
 Jesus(1) sI:c11-AUX sI:c11-die-FOC-FV LOC cross(7)-LOC
 ‘Jesus died ON A CROSS.’
- d. *dzísó ó-nè à-rí-sw-él-él-à mó sifápáánò:-h̃.*
 Jesus(1) sI:c11-AUX sI:c11-oI:1PL-die-APPL-FOC-FV LOC cross(7)-LOC
 ‘Jesus died for us ON A CROSS.’

The non-applicative uses of *-el* will be described in Sections 5–6.

4. Applied-object constructions

Tswana applicative constructions divide into two subtypes according to the syntactic role of the applied phrase. This section is devoted to the applicative constructions in which the applied phrase fulfills the syntactic role of object, henceforth designated as APPLIED-OBJECT CONSTRUCTIONS (as opposed to APPLIED-OBLIQUE CONSTRUCTIONS, in which the applied phrase is syntactically an oblique).

4.1. Applied-object constructions as obligatory applicatives

In Tswana, applied-object constructions are very productive. As already commented in Section 3.1, and further illustrated by example (9), they are obligatory applicative constructions, in the sense that the participant encoded as the applied object cannot feature in a monoclausal construction whose nucleus would be the base verb.

- (9) a. *lòráátó 'ó-tláà-rók-á mòsî:sî.*
 Lorato(1) sI:c11-FUT-sew-FV dress(3)
 ‘Lorato will sew a dress.’
- b. *lòráátó 'ó-tláà-rók-él-á dímp'hó mòsî:sî.*
 Lorato(1) sI:c11-FUT-sew-APPL-FV Dimpho(1) dress(3)
 ‘Lorato will sew a dress for Dimpho.’
- c. **lòráátó 'ó-tláà-rók-á dímp'hó mòsî:sî.*
 Lorato(1) sI:c11-FUT-sew-FV Dimpho(1) dress(3)
- d. **lòráátó 'ó-tláà-rók-á mòsîsî PREP dímp'hó.*
 Lorato(1) sI:c11-FUT-sew-FV dress(3) Dimpho(1)

In some Bantu languages, an applicative suffix cognate with *-el* can be found not only in obligatory applicative constructions, but also in optional applicative constructions in which the applied object expresses the role of instrument, also expressible by means of a prepositional phrase in a non-applicative construction (Pacchiarotti, this volume). However, this possibility does not exist in Tswana, where instrumental adjuncts can only be expressed as prepositional phrases.

4.2. The treatment of the initial object in applied-object constructions

Consistently with the use of double-object constructions as the coding frame of trivalent verbs, in Tswana, the presence of an applied object in applicative constructions of transitive verbs does not necessitate the demotion of the initial object: if the base verb is transitive, the construction of the applicative verb is a double-object construction similar to that of trivalent verbs, showing the same symmetries, and subject to the same animacy-driven rule as regards the order of the object phrases and object indexes. For example, in an applied-object construction such as (10a), both the initial

object and the applied object can be indexed at the same time and can equally be converted into the subject of a passive construction. The only constraint is that, in the construction of *rókélá*, the promotion of the initial object in a passive construction blocks the possibility of indexing the applied object, but a similar constraint operates in the double-object construction of underived verbs such as ‘give’.

- (10) a. *lòrátó* ¹*ó-tláà-rók-él-á* *dìmp^hó* *mòsì:sì.*
Lorato(1) sI:cl1-FUT-write-APPL-FV Dimpho(1) dress(3)
‘Lorato will sew a dress for Dimpho.’
- b. *lòrátó* ¹*ó-tláà-ó-mò-rók-ê:l-à.*
Lorato(1) sI:cl1-FUT-oI:cl3-oI:cl1-sew-APPL-FV
‘Lorato will sew it for her.’
- c. *dìmp^hó* ¹*ó-tláà-rók-él-w-á* *mòsì:sì.*
Dimpho(1) sI:cl1-FUT-sew-APPL-PASS-FV dress(3)
Lit. ‘Dimpho will be sewn.for a dress.’
- d. *mòsìsì* ¹*ó-tláà-rók-él-w-á* *dìmp^hó.*
dress(3) sI:cl3-FUT-sew-APPL-PASS-FV Dimpho(1)
Lit. ‘The dress will be sewn.for Dimpho.’
- e. *dìmp^hó* ¹*ó-tláà-ó-rók-ê:l-w-à.*
Dimpho(1) sI:cl1-FUT-oI:cl3-sew-APPL-PASS-FV
Lit. ‘Dimpho will be sewn.for it.’
- f. **mòsìsì* ¹*ó-tláà-mò-rók-ê:l-w-à.*
dress(3) sI:cl3-FUT-oI:cl1-sew-APPL-PASS-FV

Depending on the valency of the base verb, it is possible to have three-object constructions in which one of the objects is an applied object, whereas the other objects either express arguments of the underived verb, or have been introduced by causative derivation. The latter possibility, already illustrated in example (3) above, is further illustrated in (11).

- (11) *néó* ¹*ó-tláà-rók-ís-éts-à* *dìmp^hó* *lòrátó* *mòsì:sì.*
Neo(1) sI:cl1-FUT-write-CAUS-APPL-FV Dimpho(1) Lorato(1) dress(3)
‘Neo will make Lorato sew a dress for Dimpho.’

Examples (12) and (13) illustrate three-object constructions resulting from applicativization of a verb whose basic coding frame is a double-object construction.

- (12) a. *kì-f-íl-é* *ɲwánàké* *mà:dí.*
sI:1SG-give-PRF-FV my.child(1) money(6)
‘I gave money to my son.’
- b. *kì-f-éts-í* *ɲwánàké* *bàisìkìlì* *mà:dí.*
sI:1SG-give-APPL.PRF-FV my.child(1) bicycle(9) money(6)
‘I gave money to my son for a bicycle.’
- c. *kì-á-í-mò-f-ê:ts-ì.*
sI:1SG-oI:cl6-oI:cl9-oI:cl1-give-APPL.PRF-FV
‘I gave it to him for it.’
- (13) a. *kì-f-íl-é* *dìq^hòmó* *lìswá:ì.*
sI:1SG-give-PRF-FV cows(10) salt(5)
‘I gave salt to the cows.’
- b. *kì-f-éts-í* *màlómé* *dìq^hòmó* *lìswá:ì.*
sI:1SG-give-APPL.PRF-FV my.uncle(1) cows(10) salt(5)
‘I gave salt to the cows for my uncle.’

- c. *kì-lí-dí-mò-f-ê:ts-ì.*
 sI:1SG-oI:c15-oI:c110-oI:c11-give-APPL.PRF-FV
 ‘I gave it to them for him.’

Comparison of examples (12) and (13) shows that the order of the objects in such constructions is not determined by their syntactic status as base objects or applied objects, but simply by the general animacy-based rule that also determines the linear order of objects with verbs whose basic coding-frame is a double-object construction.⁸

4.3. The semantic roles of applied objects

Some languages have applicative markers that specify the semantic role expressed by the applied object, or at least limit the semantic roles that can be expressed by the applied phrase. This is clearly not the case in Tswana, which can be characterized as having a semantically unspecified applicative marker available to license the expression of semantic roles that cannot be expressed as objects in a non-applicative construction, or by means of a preposition. In applied-object constructions, three semantic types of applied objects can be distinguished; they are examined in turn in Sections 4.3.1–4.3.3.

4.3.1. Applied objects representing non-essential participants

Examples (12) and (13) above show that, in the applied-object construction of ‘give’, the applied object may express the roles of beneficiary or purpose. Applied objects interpreted as beneficiaries are particularly common, but applied objects with a meaning of cause or purpose (these two meanings being often difficult to distinguish) are also quite common. Example (14) illustrates the possibility of a benefactive or purposive interpretation of the applied object of *bilétsá* (applicative form of *bítsá* ‘call’).

- (14) a. *mòsádí* ¹*ó-bíl-éts-á* *bàná* *dì:dzò.*
 woman(1) sI:c11-call-APPL-FV children(2) food(10)
 ‘The woman is calling the children to eat.’
 b. *mòsádí* ¹*ó-bíl-éts-á* *bàná* *ηá:kà.*
 woman(1) sI:c11-call-APPL-FV children(2) doctor(9)
 ‘The woman is calling the doctor for the children.’

Examples (15) to (20) further illustrate the possibility of a causal or purposive reading of applied objects. Note that, in examples (18) and (20), the applied phrase is an infinitive.

- (15) *kítsó* ¹*ó-bérék-él-à* *tíê:χò.*
 Kitso(1) sI:c11-work-APPL-FV delay(9)
 Lit. ‘Kitso is working for the delay.’ (> in order to make up for lost time)
- (16) *mà-χòdù* *á-bólá-éts-í* *mòhna* *mà:dí.*
 thieves(6) sI:c16-kill-APPL.PRF-FV man(1) money(6)
 ‘The thieves killed the man for money.’
- (17) *kì-lèbòχ-él-à* *kítsó* *mà:dí.*
 sI:1SG-thank-APPL-FV Kitso(1) money(6)
 ‘I am thanking Kitso for the money.’
- (18) *lòsíá* ¹*ló-líl-él-à* *χò-â:nà.*

⁸ An exception to this rule will be mentioned in Section 4.3.1.

baby(11) sI:cl11-cry-APPL-FV INF-suck
 ‘The baby is crying [because he wants] to suck.’

(19) *kì-tlàà-bón-él-á ntlò kái mà:dí?*
 sI:1SG-FUT-see-APPL-FV house(9) where money(6)
 ‘Where shall I find money for the house?’

(20) *màpòdisi á-mù-ts^hwár-éts-í χò-χát-ís-á mót^hò ìmótòròkà:ra.*
 policemen(6) sI:cl6-oI:cl11-arrest-APPL.PRF-FV INF-step.on-CAUS-FV person(1) car(3)
 ‘The policemen arrested him for driving over a person with his car.’

(21) *mòsisi ó kí-tlàà-ó-ápár-él-à mòdi:rò.*
 dress(3) cl3.DEM sI:1SG-FUT-oI:cl3-wear-APPL-FV ceremony(3)
 ‘This dress, I’ll wear it for the ceremony.’

In particular, constructions with the interrogative pronoun *ìj* in the role of applied object are a very common strategy to question about the cause or purpose of the event, as in (22), to be compared with (18) above, or (23).

(22) *lòsía ’lò-lil-él-à ìj?*
 baby(11) sI:cl11-cry-APPL-FV what
 ‘Why is the baby crying?’

(23) *ò-rí-tl^hódi-él-à ìj mó χàrí χ-á-bùsì:χò.*
 sI:2SG-oI:1PL-disturb-APPL-FV what LOC middle(17) cl.17-GEN-night(14)
 ‘Why do you disturb us in the middle of the night?’

In this particular use of applied-object constructions, a special rule according to which *ìj* referring to the cause or purpose of the event must immediately follow the verb supersedes the general rule determining the linear order of objects in multiple-object constructions (Cole 1955: 432), as can be observed by comparing (24a) (where *ìj* represents the initial object of ‘buy’) with (24b) (where *ìj* in the role of applied object is the equivalent of English *why*).

(24) a. *ò-rék-él-à bàná ì:íj?*
 sI:2SG-buy-APPL-FV children(2) what
 ‘What are you buying for the children?’
 b. *ò-rék-él-él-à ìj bàná diàpà:rò?*
 sI:2SG-buy-APPL-APPL-FV what children(2) clothes(10)
 ‘Why are you buying clothes for the children?’

4.3.2. Applied objects expressing the role of concernee

One of the possible functions of applicative derivation in Tswana (as in many other languages) is to license a concernee-concern (or “external possession”) construction with the concernee (“external possessor”) in the role of applied object, the concern fulfilling the subject or object role in accordance with its role in the event denoted by the verb.⁹

In Tswana, non-applicative constructions with an object phrase expressing the role of concernee are possible if the relationship that motivates the use of a concernee-concern construction is a whole-part relationship, as in (25) and (26). Note that *sit^hàrì* in (25) and *ηwàná* in (26) cannot be analyzed as adnominal possessors, since the corresponding adnominal possession constructions would be *dikàlà ts-á-sit^hàrì* ‘the branches of the tree’ and *siàtlà s-á-ηwàná* ‘the child’s hand’.

⁹ For a discussion of the notion of concernee-concern construction, and a general survey of concernee-concern constructions in Bantu, see Van de Velde (2020).

- (25) *kì-rém-íl-é* *sítl^hàrì* *dìkà:là.*
 sI:1SG-chop-PRF-FV tree(7) branches(10)
 Lit. ‘I chopped the tree the branches.’ > ‘I chopped off the branches of the tree.’

- (26) *mònná* *’ó-ts^hwér-í* *ɣwàná* *síà:tlà.*
 man(1) sI:cl1-seize-PRF-FV child(1) hand(7)
 Lit. ‘The man seized the child the hand.’ > ‘The man seized the child by the hand.’

However, if the semantic relationship between the concerne and the concern is other than a whole-part relationship, the concerne must be encoded as an applied object, as in (27) and (28).

- (27) a. *m̀p^hó* *’ó-dʒ-íl-é* *dínà:wá.*
 Mpho(1) sI:cl1-eat-PRF-FV beans(10)
 ‘Mpho ate the beans.’
 b. *m̀p^hó* *’ó-dʒ-éts-í* *’kítsó* *dínà:wá.*
 Mpho(1) sI:cl1-eat-APPL-PRF-FV Kitso(1) beans(10)
 Lit. ‘Mpho ate.APPL Kitso the beans.’ > ‘Mpho ate Kitso’s beans.’ (i.e., the beans that had been prepared for Kitso)

- (28) a. *m̀òχóté* *’ó-χòd-í:l-è.*
 fever(3) sI:cl3-grow-PRF-FV
 ‘The fever has gone up.’
 b. *m̀òχóté* *’ó-m̀-χól-é:ts-ì.*
 fever(3) sI:cl3-ol:cl1-grow-APPL-PRF-FV
 Lit. ‘The fever has gone.up.APPL him.’ > ‘His fever has gone up.’

Examples (29) and (30) illustrate the conversion of an applied object representing a concerne into the subject of a passive construction. Such a combination of applicativization and passivization results in constructions functionally similar to the “adversative passives” found in Japanese and other languages.

- (29) *rì-f-él-w-à* *kí* *màn:tlò.*
 sI:1PL-burn-APPL-PASS-FV by houses(6)
 Lit. ‘We are burnt.APPL by houses.’ > ‘Our houses are burning.’
- (30) *kítsó* *’ó-sw-éts-w-ì* *kí* *’ràà:χwé.*
 Kitso(1) sI:cl1-die-APPL-PRF-PASS-FV by his.father(1)
 Lit. ‘Kitso has been died.APPL by his father.’ > ‘Kitso’s father has died.’

Semantically, there is an obvious affinity between applied objects expressing the semantic role of concerne and applied objects expressing the semantic role of beneficiary. The difference is that the notion of concerne (in contrast to the notion of beneficiary, which carries no such implication) implies the existence of a previously established relationship between the concerne and the concern.

4.3.3. Applied objects referring to essential participants

In Tswana, applicative derivation does not only license applied objects expressing semantic roles independent from the lexical meaning of the verb. In many cases, the applied object is in fact best analyzed as a semantic argument of the verb that can only be expressed as an applied object, since its semantic role is implied by the lexical meaning of the verb.

For example, the lexical meaning of *dúélá* ‘pay’ implies three participants: the payer, the recipient, and the thing being paid. In Tswana, *dúélá* in its underived form can only be used in a single-object construction whose object represents the recipient (31a-b), and there is no possibility of referring to the thing being paid by means of a prepositional phrase. Consequently, the thing being paid can only be mentioned as the applied object of the derived verb *dúélélà*, as in (31c).

- (31) a. *kì-tlàà-χò-dúél-à* *ká* ¹*tʰé:kè.*
 sI:1SG-FUT-oI:2SG-pay-FV with check(9)
 ‘I’ll pay you by check.’
- b. **kì-tlàà-dúél-á* ¹*pááká:ɲò.*
 sI:1SG-FUT-pay-FV repair(9)
 intended: ‘I’ll pay the repair fee.’
- c. *kì-tlàà-dúél-él-à* *pááká:ɲò.*
 sI:1SG-FUT-pay-APPL-FV repair(9)
 ‘I’ll pay the repair fee.’

Examples (32) to (36) provide further illustrations of applied objects referring to participants for which an analysis as essential participants in the event denoted by the verb can be considered.

- (32) a. *qʰósí* ¹*í-átʰól-éts-í* *mòhna* *bóχò:dù.*
 king(9) sI:cI9-condemn-APPL.PRF-FV man(1) theft(14)
 ‘The king condemned the man for theft.’
- b. *qʰósí* ¹*í-átʰól-éts-í* *mòhna* *lò:só.*
 king(9) sI:cI9-condemn-APPL.PRF-FV man(1) death(11)
 ‘The king condemned the man to death.’
- (33) *mòsádi* *jó* ¹*ó-ák-él-à* *rálíbínłí:lì.*
 woman(1) cI1.DEM sI:cI1-tell.lies-APPL-FV shopkeeper(1)
 ‘This woman is telling lies about the shopkeeper.’
- (34) *màbèlé* ¹*á-áláf-èl-w-à* *tsʰù:pà.*
 sorghum(6) sI:cI6-treat-APPL-PASS-FV SG.tshupa(9)
 ‘The sorghum is treated against tshupa (a kind of worm).’
- (35) *mòsétsánà* *jó* ¹*ó-fós-éts-à* *sìtswá:nà.*
 girl(1) cI1.DEM sI:cI1-miss-APPL-FV Tswana.customs(7)
 ‘This girl contravenes Tswana customs.’
- (36) *kì-χáqʰámál-él-à* *bòpìlókʰálì* *dʒw-á-ɲwàná:* *jò.*
 sI:1SG-be.impressed-APPL-FV courage(14) cI14-GEN-child(1) cI1.DEM
 ‘I am impressed by the courage of this child.’

In this connection, the behavior of *kwálá* ‘write’ is particularly interesting to analyze. *kwálá* is basically a bivalent verb, but the selection of *lòkwáló* ‘letter’ as its object implies a third essential participant with the semantic role of recipient, since a letter is intended to be sent to someone. However, the recipient of *kwálá lòkwáló* ‘write a letter’, contrary to the recipient of the verbs that are inherently verbs of giving, must be encoded as an applied object, with the consequence that, in a clause such as (37b), the applied object can be understood as referring to the recipient (essential participant) or to a beneficiary (non-essential participant). Note that the repetition of the applicative suffix makes it possible to express both roles simultaneously, and then the applied object that immediately follows the verb is unambiguously interpreted as a beneficiary, whereas the applied object in second position is interpreted as the recipient, exactly as in the three-object construction

expressing ‘give s.th. to s.o. in behalf of s.o.’ (see example (2) above).

- (37) a. *kì-tlàà-kwál-á* *lòkwâ:lò.*
 sI:1SG-FUT-write-FV letter(11)
 ‘I’ll write a letter.’
- b. *kì-tlàà-kwál-él-á* *m̀pʰó* *lòkwâ:lò.*
 sI:1SG-FUT-write-APPL-FV Mpho(1) letter(11)
 ‘I’ll write a letter to Mpho.’
 OR ‘I’ll write a letter on behalf of Mpho.’
- c. *kì-tlàà-kwál-él-él-à* *̀r̀ré* *m̀pʰó* *lòkwâ:lò.*
 sI:1SG-FUT-write-APPL-APPL-FV my.father(c11) Mpho(1) letter(11)
 ‘I’ll write a letter to Mpho on behalf of my father.’

5. Applied-oblique constructions

5.1. Introductory remarks

The definition of applicative constructions adopted in this chapter includes constructions in which a derived form of the verb assigns an oblique grammatical relation to an NP (the applied phrase) representing a non-core participant that could not be coded in the same way (or could not be coded at all) in the construction of the base verb.

Bantu languages in general, and Tswana in particular, provide many interesting data about constructions meeting the broad definition of applicative constructions that involve the same derived form of verbs as applied-object constructions, but in which the applied phrase is a locative phrase that does not have the syntactic status of object.

In the uses of *-el* examined in this section, as in its use in applied-object constructions, *-el* licenses a term expressing a particular semantic role that could not be expressed in the construction of the base verb. However, the term in question is not encoded as an object NP, but as a locative phrase showing no evidence of a syntactic status different from that of ordinary obliques: it cannot be cross-referenced by an object index, or converted into the subject of a passive construction, and more generally, apart from the fact that its deletion results in ungrammaticality, it behaves like locative phrases accompanying non-derived verbs.

For a proper understanding of the data commented in this section, it is crucial to keep in mind that, in Tswana, as in the vast majority of Bantu languages, locative phrases are not specified for the location vs. source vs. destination distinction.¹⁰ In Tswana, the precise semantic role of locatives in the construction of non-applicative verbs is regulated in the following way:

- (a) any Tswana verb can combine with a locative phrase expressing the location of the event, or of a participant in the event, as in example (38);
- (b) in combination with some motion verbs, locative phrases are assigned the semantic role of destination, as in example (39);
- (c) with some other motion verbs, locative phrases are assigned the role of source, as in example (40).

- (38) *kítsó* *ʼó-bérék-à* *kó* *kà.jé.*
 Kitso(1) sI:c11-work-FV LOC Kanye
 ‘Kitso is working in Kanye.’

¹⁰ This particularity in the encoding of spatial relationships is found in many language families of sub-Saharan Africa, in particular (but not only) among those belonging to the Niger-Congo phylum.

- (39) *kítsó ú-il-é kó kà:nyé.*
 Kitso(1) sI:cII-go.PRF-FV LOC Kanye
 ‘Kitso went to Kanye.’

- (40) *kítsó 'ú-húdúχ-il-è kó kà:nyé.*
 Kitso(1) sI:cII-move-PRF-FV LOC Kanye
 ‘Kitso moved from Kanye.’

Interestingly, applicative derivation may license locative phrases expressing roles other than the role they would express in combination with the underived form of the same verb. Three cases must be distinguished.

5.2. Motion verbs that cannot assign the role of source or destination

tábóχá ‘run’ is semantically a motion verb, but in its underived form, it has no semantic role to assign to a locative phrase, which means that the only available interpretation for a locative term in the construction of *tábóχá* in its underived form is the default interpretation of location of the event. By contrast, a locative in the construction of the applicative form *tábóχéla* can be interpreted as referring to destination of motion—Example (41b). The same behavior is observed with *àkòfà* ‘hurry’, *fòfà* ‘fly’, *fità* ‘pass’, etc.

- (41) a. *kì-tlàà-tábóχ-à kó tsilê:-ŋ.*
 sI:1SG-FUT-run-FV LOC road(9)-LOC
 ‘I will run on the road.’
 b. *kì-tlàà-tábóχ-él-à kó tsilê:-ŋ.*
 sI:1SG-FUT-run-APPL-FV LOC road(9)-LOC
 ‘I will run to the road.’¹¹

In this particular case (but not in those examined in the remainder of this section), an applied-object construction, as in (42), would be possible with the same meaning.

- (42) *kì-tlàà-tábóχ-él-à tsì:là.*
 sI:1SG-FUT-run-APPL-FV road(9)
 ‘I will run to the road.’

There is an obvious relationship with the fact that, in Tswana, non-derived verbs of motion that assign the role of destination (such as *jà* ‘go’) have an alternative construction in which the destination is encoded as the object of a transitive construction.

5.3. Motion verbs that assign the role of source in their underived form

With motion verbs whose underived form assigns the role of source to locative complements, the applicative form has the same formal valency as the non-derived form, but assigns to its locative complement the role of destination, as illustrated in example (43) by *húdúχá* ‘change one’s residence’.

- (43) a. *kì-tlàà-húdúχ-à kó Kà:nyé.*
 sI:1SG-FUT-move-FV LOC Kanye
 ‘I will move from Kanye.’
 b. *kì-tlàà-húdúχ-él-à kó χàbóró:nì.*

¹¹ See Section 6.1 for another possible interpretation of this sentence.

sI:1SG-FUT-move-APPL-FV LOC Gaborone

‘I will move to Gaborone.’

Crucially, in contrast to applied-object constructions, the applicative constructions of motion verbs with a locative as the applied phrase are not valency-increasing, but VALENCY-REARRANGING. The addition of the suffix *-el* to verbs such as *húdúχá* gives them the capacity to take a locative complement referring to destination of motion, but at the same time precludes them from taking a locative complement referring to source of motion. In order to express ‘move from A to B’, Tswana must use a clause chain with a first clause in which the non-derived form of *húdúχá* is followed by a locative complement specifying the source of motion, and a second clause in which the applicative form of the same verb is followed by a locative complement specifying the destination of motion, as in (44). More generally, Tswana, like many languages of sub-Saharan Africa, cannot specify the source and destination of motion within the frame of monoverbal constructions.

- (44) *kì-tlàà-húdúχ-à kó Kàñé kì-húdúχ-él-ì kó χàbórò.nì.*
 sI:1SG-FUT-move-FV LOC Kanye sI:1SG-move-APPL-FV LOC Gaborone
 ‘I will move from Kanye [and will move.APPL] to Gaborone.’

Here again, it is interesting to observe that the applied phrase cannot be analyzed as referring to a marginal participant or a circumstance of the event, since the lexical meaning of *húdúχá* ‘change one’s residence’ cannot be defined without mentioning both a source and a destination of motion, and there is no a priori reason why special marking should be required to express the destination but not the source, rather than the other way round.

5.4. Verbs that do not express motion

Verbs that do not express motion freely combine with locatives expressing the location of the event or of a participant, as already illustrated by example (38) above, but the use of the applicative form is obligatory to license the presence of a locative whose semantic role departs more or less from the mere indication of a location.

For example, Tswana syntax is sensitive to the difference in the semantic role of *in the yard* and *in the big pot* in *She is cooking porridge in the yard* / *She is cooking porridge in the big pot*. In the first sentence, *in the yard* expresses nothing more than the location of the event, whereas in the event represented by the second sentence, the pot contains the porridge, which justifies coding it as a locative, but it is also an essential element of the porridge cooking event, in which it plays the role of an indispensable instrument. In other words, the spatial relationship between the pot and the porridge is not accidental; it follows from the role they play in the cooking event, and this may explain why, in the Tswana equivalent of *She is cooking porridge in the yard*, the verb *cook* can remain in its underived form, whereas in the equivalent of *She is cooking the porridge in the big pot*, the verb *cook* must be in the same applicative form as when, for example, a noun phrase referring to a beneficiary is added to the construction of this verb. Interestingly, the applicative derivation must be reiterated in order to make it possible to mention both the vessel used to cook the porridge and the beneficiary of the cooking event—Example (45).

- (45) a. *lòráátó ʼó-tláá-àpàj-à mòtò:χó.*
 Lorato(1) sI:cI1-FUT-cook-FV porridge(3)
 ‘Lorato will cook the porridge.’
 b. *lòráátó ʼó-tláá-àpè-èl-à bàná mòtò:χó.*
 Lorato(1) sI:cI1-FUT-cook-APPL-FV children(2) porridge(3)
 ‘Lorato will cook the porridge for the children.’

- c. *lòráátó* ^ʼ*ó-tláá-àpè-él-à* *mùtòχó* *mó* *pìtsé-ḡ* *é* ^ʼ*tò:nà*.
 Lorato(1) sI:c11-FUT-cook-APPL-FV porridge(3) LOC pot(9)-LOC cl9.LK cl9.big
 ‘Lorato will cook the porridge in the big pot.’
- d. *lòráátó* ^ʼ*ó-tláá-àpè-él-él-à* *bàná* *mòtòχó*
 Lorato(1) sI:c11-FUT-cook-APPL-APPL-FV children(2) porridge(3)
mó *pìtsé-ḡ* *é* ^ʼ*tò:nà*.
 LOC pot(9)-LOC cl9.LK cl9.big
 ‘Lorato will cook the porridge for the children in the big pot.’

Examples (46) and (47) provide additional illustrations of the obligatory use of applicative forms of verbs that do not express motion to license a locative phrase whose semantic role is not limited to the mere expression of location, since it refers to an essential element in the situation denoted by the verb.

- (46) *dìqʰòmó* ^ʼ*dí-nw-él-à* *mó* *mòkórò:-ḡ*.
 cows(10) sI:c110-drink-APPL-FV LOC mokoro(3)-LOC
 ‘Cows drink from a *mokoro*.’ (a tree trunk carved in the shape of a canoe)
- (47) *rì-kwál-él-à* *mó* *pámpirí:-ḡ*.
 sI:1PL-write-APPL-FV LOC paper(9)-LOC
 ‘We write on paper.’

5.5. The particular case of *róká* ‘sew’ and *bófá* ‘bind’

róká ‘sew’ and *bófá* ‘bind’ can be found in applicative constructions of the type discussed in Section 5.4, in which the applied phrase is a locative whose semantic role does not boil down to the expression of location, since it refers to a participant playing an essential role in the event referred to: the surface on which something is being fixed (48), or a stationary object to which something is being tied (49). What is, however, difficult to explain, is that, with these two verbs (and not with others), the applicative marker must be repeated in a construction including a single applied phrase.

- (48) *lòráátó* ^ʼ*ó-rók-él-él-à* *dikónópó* ^ʼ*mó* *siàpàrò-ḡ* *s-á:-mì*.
 Lorato(1) sI:c11-sew-APPL-APPL-FV buttons(10) LOC dress(7)-LOC cl7-GEN-1SG
 ‘Lorato is sewing buttons on my dress.’
- (49) *kì-tlàà-bóf-él-él-à* *pìtsí* ^ʼ*fá* *sítlʰàrì:-ḡ*.
 sI:1SG-FUT-tie-APPL-APPL-FV horse(9) LOC tree(7)-LOC
 ‘I’ll tie the horse to the tree.’

5.6. Applicative constructions triggered by the adverb *rúrí*

rúrí is an adverb that can be found in two distinct constructions. In clause-initial position, it expresses a meaning that can be glossed as ‘really’, ‘truly’, ‘surely’. It does not modify the propositional content of the clause and has no incidence on the verb form. In post-verbal position, it expresses a meaning that can be glossed as ‘for a long time’, ‘for ever’, ‘for real’, ‘irrevocably’. In this construction, in which *rúrí* contributes to the propositional content of the clause, the verb must be in the applicative form, and the deletion of the applicative marker results in ungrammaticality.

- (50) *bá-tláá-χò-bóla-él-à* *rú:rì*.
 sI:c12-FUT-oI:2SG-kill-APPL-FV for.real
 ‘They will kill you for real.’

- (51) *bá-nè* *bà-χópól-á* *χóri* *tóhki* *'i-lát^héχ-éts-ì* *rú:rì.*
 sI:cl2-AUX sI:cl2-think-FV that donkey(9) sI:cl9-get.lost-APPL.PRF-FV definitely
 ‘They thought that the donkey had definitely been lost.’

This is, to the best of my knowledge, the only case of a Tswana applicative construction in which the applied phrase is not a nominal or a locative.

6. *-el* in constructions with instrumental subject

In Tswana, participants usually treated as instrumental adjuncts in the construction of the underived form of a verb, i.e. encoded as complements of the instrumental preposition *ká*, as in (52a), cannot be encoded as applied phrases. However, if no agent is mentioned, instruments can take the role of subject in constructions such as (52b), where the verb is in the same form as in applicative constructions, and the referent of the subject of the base verb (the agent) is left unexpressed (and is interpreted as non-specific). Even in a very broad conception of applicative constructions, a crucial property of applicativization is that it triggers no change in the semantic role of the subject. Consequently, in spite of the fact that the verb form in (52b) obligatorily includes the same marker *-el* as the verb forms found in applicative constructions, (52b) cannot be analyzed as an applicative construction, and rather meets the definition of oblique passivization (i.e., subject demotion compensated by the promotion of an oblique to subject role).

- (52) a. *ó-nè* *à-fàbà* *bò-χóbé* *'ká* *námà* *j-á-q^há:kà.*
 sI:cl1-AUX sI:cl1 -flavor-FV porridge(14) with flesh(9) c19-GEN-guinea.fowl(9)
 ‘He flavored the porridge with the flesh of the guinea-fowl.’
 b. *námà* *í-fáb-él-à* *bòχô:bè.*
 flesh(9) sI:cl9-flavor-?-FV porridge(14)
 ‘Meat gives flavor to the porridge.’

As already mentioned above, in Tswana, instruments usually encoded as locatives by virtue of the spatial relationship they necessarily have with the referent of the object require applicative marking on the verb. Interestingly, with such instruments, as illustrated in (53), promotion to subject does not necessitate the insertion of an additional applicative marker.

- (53) a. *mòsádi* *ó-nè* *à-ts^hól-él-à* *bòχóbé* *mó* *mìχópô:-ìj.*
 woman(1) sI:cl1-AUX sI:cl1-dish.out-APPL-FV porridge(14) LOC wooden.bowls(4)-LOC
 ‘The woman dished out the porridge into the wooden bowls.’
 b. *mòχópó* *'ó-ts^hól-él-à* *bòχô:bè.*
 wooden.bowl(3) sI:cl3-dish.out-?-FV porridge(14)
 ‘The wooden bowl is used to dish out porridge.’

7. Uses of *-el* not related to valency operations

7.1. *-el* and the focalization of locative adjuncts

In Tswana clauses including a locative phrase expressing the location of the event, the suffix *-el* may be added to the verb form without any other change in the form of the clause and without any change in the semantic role of the locative phrase, which rules out analyzing *-el* as marking a valency operation (applicativization or other). In this case, the function of *-el* is to mark focalization of the locative expressing the location of the event, as in (54b). This use of *-el* constitutes an alternative to cleft constructions, which are in Tswana the standard way to express focalization.

However, it is only available if the term to be focalized is a locative expressing the location of the event.

- (54) a. *mòhàná w-á-mí ó-nè à-sw-á kó mòráfô:-h̃.*
 man(1) c11-GEN-1SG sI:c11-AUX sI:c11-die-FV LOC mine(3)-LOC
 ‘My husband died in the mine.’
- b. *mòhàná w-á-mí ó-nè à-sw-él-à kó mòráfô:-h̃.*
 man(1) c11-GEN-1SG sI:c11-AUX sI:c11-die-FOC-FV LOC mine(3)-LOC
 ‘My husband died IN THE MINE.’

Examples (55) and (56) provide further illustration of the focalizing use of *-el*.

- (55) *lòrátó 'ó-ápé-él-à mó dzàràtê:-h̃.*
 Lorato(1) sI:c11-cook-FOC-FV LOC yard(9)-LOC
 ‘Lorato is doing the cooking IN THE YARD.’

- (56) *kì-tsál-éts-w-ì kó kà.ɲé.*
 sI:1SG-give.birth-FOC.PRF-FOC-FV LOC Kanye
 ‘I was born IN KANYE.’

Interestingly, this use of the suffix *-el* results in ambiguity in the case of motion verbs that cannot assign the role of source of motion or destination of motion to a locative complement, since with such verbs, *-el* may also mark an applicative construction in which the locative expresses the role of destination of motion. For example, in (41) above, repeated here as (57), the second sentence is in fact ambiguous between an interpretation according to which *-el* marks a change in the role-assigning properties of *tábóχá* (‘I will run TO the road [not ON the road]’), and another interpretation according to which the applicative suffix marks the focalization of a locative phrase without modifying its semantic role of location.

- (57) a. *kì-tlàà-tábóχ-à kó tsilê:-h̃.*
 sI:1SG-FUT-run-FV LOC road(9)-LOC
 ‘I will run on the road.’
- b. *kì-tlàà-tábóχ-él-à kó tsilê:-h̃.*
 sI:1SG-FUT-run-APPL/FOC-FV LOC road(9)-LOC
 ‘I will run to the road.’ OR ‘I will run ON THE ROAD (and nowhere else).’

7.2. *-el* and the expression of habituality of action at some place

In Tswana clauses including a locative phrase expressing the location of the event, in addition to its use to mark the focalization of the locative phrase without any change in the assignment of semantic roles, the applicative marker *-el* can also be used to express the aspectual notion of habituality of action at the place referred to by the locative phrase, without any change in the construction or in the assignment of semantic roles. Example (55) above, repeated here as (58b), is in fact ambiguous between a focalizing and a habitual reading of the verbal suffix *-el* also used in applicative function.

- (58) a. *lòrátó 'ó-ápáj-à mó dzàràtê:-h̃.*
 Lorato(1) sI:c11-cook-FV LOC yard(9)-LOC
 ‘Lorato is doing the cooking in the yard.’
- b. *lòrátó 'ó-ápé-él-à mó dzàràtê:-h̃.*
 Lorato(1) sI:c11-cook-FOC/HAB-FV LOC yard(9)-LOC
 ‘Lorato does the cooking IN THE YARD.’

OR ‘Lorato habitually cooks in the yard.’

7.3. *-el* and the expression of intensity

In many Bantu languages, applicative markers also have a use in which they imply neither a formal change in the construction nor a change in the semantic roles, and are interpreted as expressing intensity of the action (completeness, persistency, effort, iterativity). Most of the time, this use of applicative markers implies reduplication, and this the case in Tswana, as illustrated in (59) by *lib-à* ‘look at’ > *lib-èlél-à* ‘watch carefully’.

- (59) a. *lib-á* *sít^hàrì:* *sé!*
 look.at-FV tree(7) cl7.DEM
 ‘Look at this tree!’
- b. *bàná* *bá-ì-t^hút-á* *tírò* *j-á-χó-lóχ-à*
 children(2) sI:cl2-REFL-teach-FV work(9) cl19-GEN-INF-plait-FV
ká *χò-lib-élél-à* *bàχò:lò.*
 by INF-look.at-EMPH-FV adults(2)
 ‘Children learn to plait by observing adults.’

The following verb pairs illustrate the intensive use of *-elél*:

<i>χán-á</i>	‘refuse’	<i>χán-élél-à</i>	‘refuse completely, be adamant’
<i>óm-á</i>	‘become dry’	<i>óm-élél-à</i>	‘become completely dried out’
<i>fít-à</i>	‘pass’	<i>fít-èlél-à</i>	‘go too far, exaggerate’
<i>dùp-à</i>	‘scent’	<i>dùp-èlél-à</i>	‘scent’ (more emphatic than <i>dùp-à</i>)
<i>χát-á</i>	‘tramp, ‘tread’	<i>χát-élél-à</i>	‘press down, oppress’
<i>q^hábétt-á</i>	‘chop into pieces’	<i>q^hábétt-élél-à</i>	‘chop into very small pieces’
<i>lík-á</i>	‘try, attempt’	<i>lík-él-élà</i>	‘try out, test, fathom’
<i>tsén-á</i>	‘enter’	<i>tsén-élél-à</i>	‘go deep into’
<i>úttw-á</i>	‘hear’	<i>úttw-élél-à</i>	‘listen’
<i>bàl-à</i>	‘count’	<i>bàl-èlél-à</i>	‘calculate with precision’

There are also pairs such as *χ-á* / *χ-élél-á* ‘draw (water)’, or *lètt-à* / *lètt-èlél-à* ‘allow, permit’, described as fully synonymous in the dictionaries.

Interestingly, with some verbs, the same meaning of intensity without any change in the valency is expressed by the reduplication of the causative suffix.

8. Lexicalized applicatives

The verbal lexicon of Tswana includes a non-negligible proportion of verbs whose stem ends with *-el*, and for which a semantically plausible source of derivation can be identified, but with a meaning and a construction that preclude a synchronic analysis in terms of applicativization. Such verbs can be designated as lexicalized applicatives, or pseudo-applicatives.

For example, *lálélá* ‘have dinner’ is probably cognate with *lálá* ‘lie down, go to bed, spend the night’. Having dinner is precisely what one normally does before going to bed, and consequently, there is no difficulty in analyzing a semantic shift from ‘lie down’ to ‘have dinner’ as a case of metonymy. However, the details of the evolution that led to the present situation are unclear, particularly regarding the possible involvement of an applicative marker. The only sure thing is that, in present-day Tswana, *lálélá* and *lálá* are equally intransitive, and *ká díq^hòbè* in (60b) shows no evidence of being anything else than an ordinary adjunct.

- (60) a. *rì-ttàà-lál-à* *mó náχè:-ŋ.*
 sI:1PL-FUT-lie.down-FV LOC bush(9)-LOC
 ‘We will lie down / spend the night in the bush.’
- b. *rì-ttàà-lálél-à* *ká díq^hò:bè.*
 sI:1PL-FUT-have.dinner-FV with maize.and.beans(10)
 ‘We will have maize-and-beans for dinner.’
 Lit. ‘We will have dinner with maize-and-beans.’

Similarly, Tswana *ilèlà* ‘revere’ is certainly a reflex of the same Proto-Bantu root **gid* ‘abstain from, avoid’ as *ilà* ‘hate’, since it is easy to imagine how ‘revere’ and ‘hate’ may have developed as two diverging specializations of the meaning ‘abstain from, avoid’ reconstructed for this root. What is much less clear is the role that an applicative marker might have played in this process, since synchronically, as illustrated in (61), both *ilèlà* ‘revere’ and *ilà* ‘hate’ are plain transitive verbs.

- (61) a. *kí ìŋ* *’ó-mó-î:l-à?*
 it.is what sI:2SG-sI:c11-hate-FV
 ‘Why do you hate him/her?’
- b. *bá-ilél-à* *mòdí:mò.*
 sI:c12-revere-FV god(3)
 ‘They revere God.’

Tswana also has many verbs ending with *-elèla* that may be analyzed as resulting from the lexicalization of the intensive use of the reduplication of the applicative suffix, such as *émélélà* ‘move off’, probably related etymologically to *émá* ‘stand up’.

Pacchiarotti (2020) provides an in-depth analysis of the lexicalized applicatives of Tswana, to which readers are referred for a comprehensive account.

9. The question of applicative-like uses of the causative marker

Some of the Bantu languages that have a semantically under-specified applicative marker cognate with *-el* productively use it in applicative constructions in which the applied object expresses the role of instrument, whereas others (for example, Kinyarwanda) encode instruments as applied objects in applicative constructions in which the verb is not in the form used for other semantic types of applicative constructions, but in the form typically used in causative constructions. This strategy can be viewed as expressing a conceptualization ‘Agent makes Instrument act on Patient’, made possible by the involvement of instruments in the causal chain.

In Tswana, instruments are standardly encoded by means of the preposition *ká*, without any marking on the verb, as in (62).

- (62) *ŋwàná ó-ité-il-é* *ŋtŋá ’ká t^hù:pà.*
 child(1) sI:c11-hit-PRF-FV dog(9) with stick(9)
 ‘The child hit the dog with a stick.’

However, one may wonder whether sentences such as (63) could not be analyzed as involving a marginal applicative-like use of the causative marker *-is*.

- (63) *kitsó ’ó-χát-is-its-é* *ŋtŋá ìmótoròkà:rà.*
 Kitso(1) sI:c11-step.on-CAUS-PRF-FV dog(9) car(3)
 ‘Kitso drove over a dog with his car.’

The analysis of (63) as an applicative construction with an applied object expressing the role of instrument is suggested by the English translation. However, ‘car’ in (63) is clearly not a typical instrument, nor is ‘Kitso’ (normally) interpreted as a typical agent, but rather as an “involuntary agent”. Moreover, the event referred to as (63) includes a sub-event that can be referred to as (64).

- (64) *m̄mótóròkárá* *’ó-χát-il-é* *j̄:tfá.*
 car(3) sI:cl3-step.on-PRF-FV dog(9)
 ‘The car ran over a dog.’

Consequently, there is no reason not to analyze ‘the car’ in (63) as the causee in a permissive causative construction: ‘Kitso (inadvertently) let the car run over a dog’. In other words, such constructions do not put into question the statement that all the types of applicative constructions that are possible in Tswana make use of the same applicative marker *-el*.

10. Conclusion

In this chapter, based on a relatively broad definition of applicative constructions, I have surveyed the various types of applicative constructions attested in Tswana, and the non-applicative uses of applicative morphology. According to the questionnaire proposed as a guideline for the contributions to this volume, Tswana applicative constructions can be characterized as follows:

Morphology

- All subtypes of applicative constructions attested in Tswana make use of the same marker, a verbal suffix occupying the same slot in the verbal template as several other valency-changing suffixes (causative, anticausative, and reciprocal).
- Tswana does not have constructions that could be analyzed as more or less grammaticalized applicative periphrases or analytical applicative constructions.
- The allomorphs of the applicative suffix involve no lexical conditioning, they can be exhaustively described as resulting from regular morpho-phonological processes operating on an underlying form *-el*.
- The presence of the applicative marker *-el* has no incidence on the other aspects of verb morphology.

Syntax

- Applicativization is not conditioned by the transitivity properties of the base verb; some uses of applicative constructions are conditioned by the participant frame of the base verb, but, for example, applied-object constructions with the applied object representing a beneficiary are equally possible with intransitive, transitive, and ditransitive verbs.
- Tswana has both applicative constructions in which the applied phrase is a noun phrase showing all the properties that characterize objects in non-applicative constructions, and applicative constructions in which the applied phrase is a locative showing no evidence of a syntactic status distinct from that of ordinary obliques.
- With just one exception, discussed in Section 4.3, Tswana applicatives are valency-increasing (as opposed to valency-rearranging) applicative constructions, in which the status of the applied phrase’s companion arguments/adjuncts does not change between the base construction and the applicative construction.
- There are no particular restrictions on the combination of applicativization with the other types of valency-changing operations that are grammaticalized in Tswana (causativization, anticausativization, reflexivization, reciprocalization, passivization), apart from the fact that combinations that would result in constructions including more than three objects are ruled out. Moreover, repetition of the applicative marker may license constructions including two applied

phrases with distinct semantic roles. However, verb forms including more than two occurrences of the applicative marker, or applicative constructions including more than two applied phrases, are not allowed.

- There is no difference between applicative constructions and constructions of underived verbs involving the same number of object NPs.
- Tswana applicatives are obligatory applicatives whose use is not conditioned by limited access of obliques to some operations, but simply by the impossibility to express some semantic roles otherwise than via applicativization.

Semantics

- The applicative marker is a semantically under-specified marker available to license a wide variety of semantic roles.
- The only possible generalization about the semantic roles expressed by applied phrases is that they refer to participants or circumstances that cannot be encoded as objects or as complements of prepositions: beneficiaries, cause, purpose, containers playing an essential role in the event denoted by the verb, etc. Applied phrases do not necessarily refer to peripheral participants or circumstances of the event: applied phrases referring to essential participants (i.e., participants implied by the lexical meaning of the verb) are also widely attested; for example, with some motion verbs, destination of motion can only be expressed via applicativization.
- Since Tswana applicatives are obligatory applicatives, Tswana applicative constructions have no pragmatic or discursive implication.

Lookalikes and others

- Non-applicative functions of the applicative marker include a passive-like use in which instrumental adjuncts are promoted to subject role, the focalization of locatives expressing the location of the event, the expression of habituality of action at some place, and the expression of intensity of action.
- Lexicalized applicatives constitute a non-negligible proportion of the verbal lexicon of Tswana.

Abbreviations

APPL applicative, AUX auxiliary, CAUS causative, clX class (agreement pattern) X, DEM demonstrative, EMPH emphatic, FOC focalization marker, FUT future, FV final vowel (a vowel analyzable as the inflectional ending of verbs, which, however, is not necessarily analyzable as carrying a particular TAM value by itself), GEN genitive, HAB habitual, INF infinitive, LK linker, LOC locative, NEG negation marker, oI object index, PASS passive, PL plural, PRF perfect, SG singular, sI subject index

Numbers between parentheses immediately after the gloss of noun forms refer to the agreement pattern (“class”) triggered by the noun form.

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