THE VERB IN XITSONGA

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Abstract

Attention has been focused on the syntactic structure in which these verbs may appear, various features specific to these verbs as well as some verb classes in which these verbs regularly appear.

The syntactic structure in which the intransitive verbs appear is the one developed within the Minimalist program with two verbal shells where the upper verbal shell is projected from a phonetically null light verb. The second verbal shell is assumed to be introduced by the [VP].

Intransitive verbs are distinguished as unergative and unaccusative verbs. They may appear with cognate objects, and idiomatic objects. Various verb classes with intransitive verbs have been dealt with e.g. state verbs and verbs relating to the body.

Transitive verbs with one internal argument appear in the same type of structure as the intransitive verbs. Various features of transitive verbs have been high-lighted as for instance word order, focus on the object, objectival agreement, stylistic movement, coordinated objects and other issues, as well as specific verb classes in which transitive verbs appear.
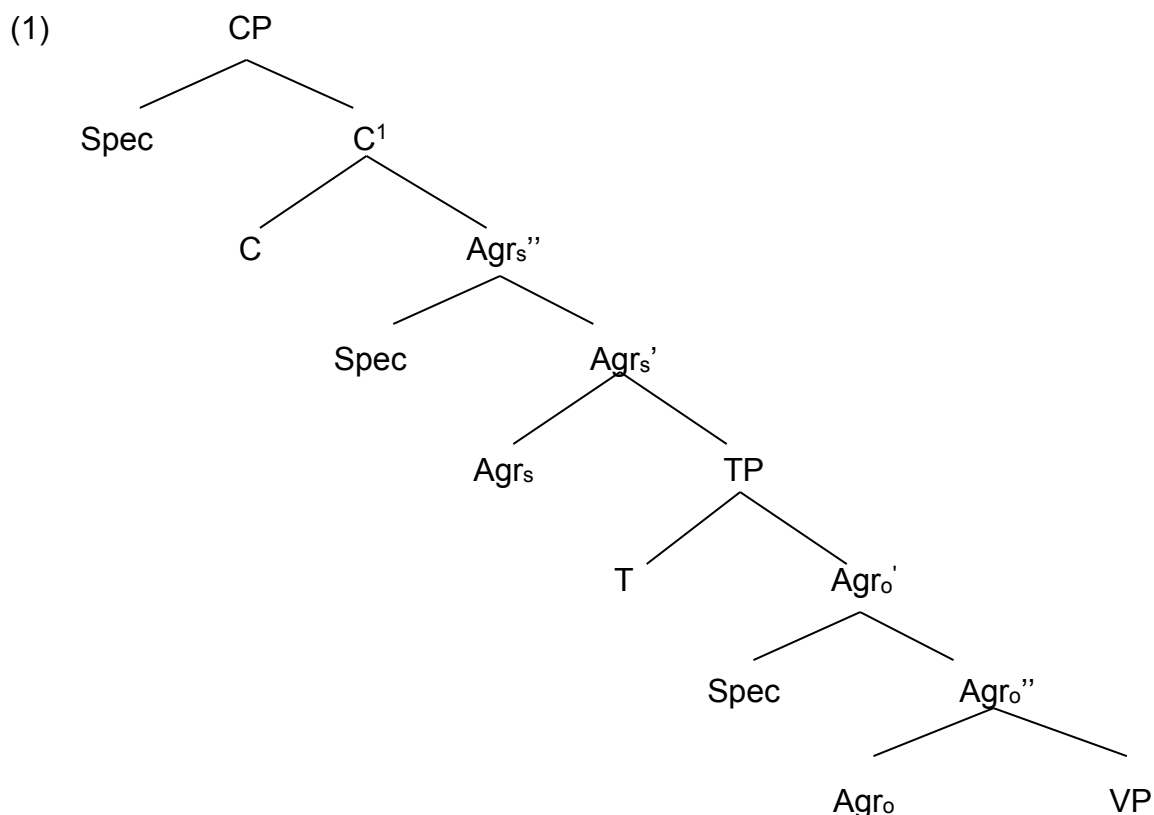
Lastly, ditransitive verbs appear in structures with the same categories as with other verbs, but each time with two internal arguments. Some features of these verbs are given as well as verb classes in which ditransitive verbs frequently appear.

CONTENTS

1.   THE STRUCTURE OF THE CLAUSE

Pollock (1989) introduced a theory of inflection with various functional categories such as agreement and tense. Chomsky (1993:7) gave an example of such a structure with functional categories:

(1)

$$
\begin{array}{l}
\text{CP} \\
\quad \diagup\ \diagdown \\
\text{Spec}\quad \text{C}^1 \\
\qquad\ \diagup\ \diagdown \\
\qquad \text{C}\quad \text{Agr}_s\text{''} \\
\qquad\qquad\ \diagup\ \diagdown \\
\qquad\qquad \text{Spec}\quad \text{Agr}_s\text{'} \\
\qquad\qquad\qquad \diagup\ \diagdown \\
\qquad\qquad\quad \text{Agr}_s\quad \text{TP} \\
\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad \diagup\ \diagdown \\
\qquad\qquad\qquad\quad \text{T}\quad \text{Agr}_o\text{'} \\
\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad \diagup\ \diagdown \\
\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad \text{Spec}\quad \text{Agr}_o\text{''} \\
\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\quad \diagup\ \diagdown \\
\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad \text{Agr}_o\qquad \text{VP}
\end{array}
$$

See also Du Plessis (1996) for an overview of functional categories in these African languages.

Larson (1988) developed a structure with two verbal shells and this issue has been developed within the Minimalist program (see Chomsky 1995). For a discussion on verbal shells, see also Hale and Keyser (1993), Adger (2003), Hornstein a.o. (2005). The Minimalist program has been extensively dealt with in i.a. Chomsky (1995, 2006), Boeckx (2006, 2008), Rizzi (2004), Belletti (2004), Khomitsevich (2008), Musabhien (2008).

The structure with two verbal shells may be shown as follows:

(2)

```
                        CP
                       /  \
               Spec, CP    C
                          /  \
                         C    TP
                             /  \
                       Subject   T
                                / \
                               T   vP
                                  /  \
                            Subject   v
                                     / \
                                    v   VP
                                       /  \
                                      V    ….
```
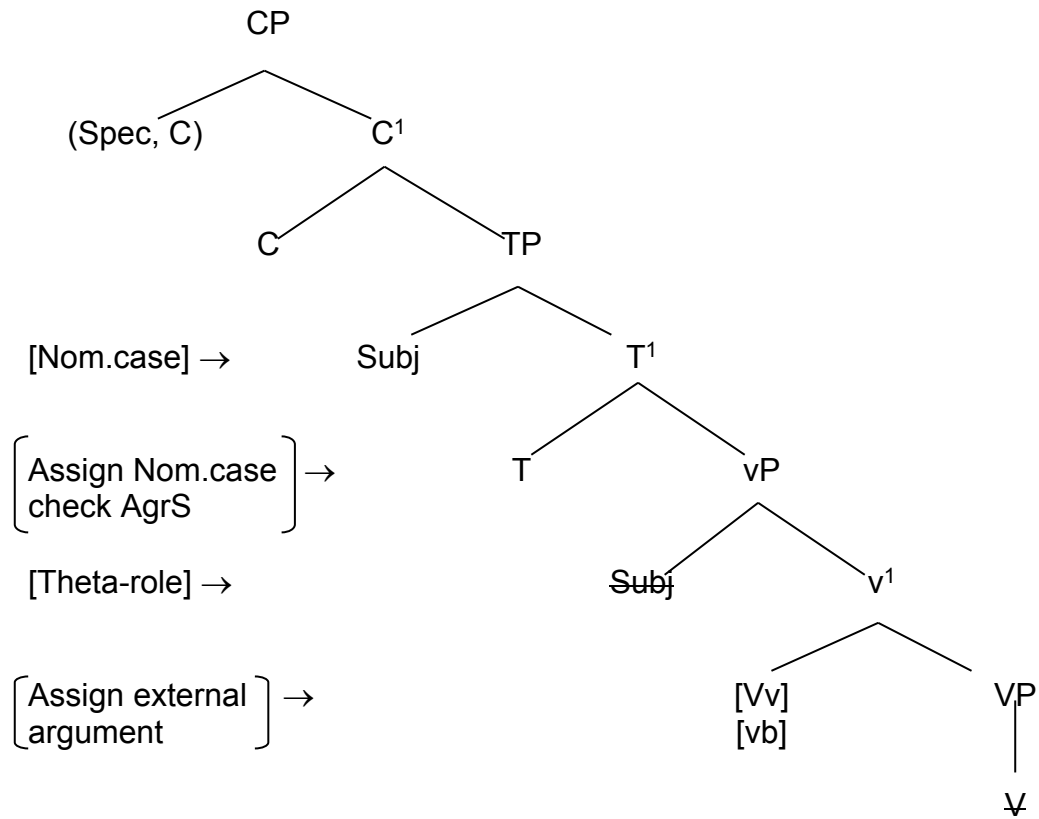
Chomsky (1995) assumes that the upper verbal shell (with vP) is projected from a phonetically null light verb. The light verb and its complement form a complex predicate. The second verbal shell is assumed to be introduced by the [VP].

The main issues concerning the structure above are the following:

– The division of IP into TP and Agr projections was rejected.

– A single T node has temporal features and Agr features for the subject.

– The role of AgrOP was taken over by the part of the split VP projection termed [vP]. [vP] is located higher than [VP] and the two verbal projections provide positions for the external and internal arguments.

– The subject originates in [Spec, v] and can move to [Spec, TP].

– The internal argument occupies the position of complement of [V].

– External arguments are generated in the specifier of the lexical head with which they enter into a theta-relation. The light verb [v] assigns the external theta-role.

– The head T assigns nominative case and checks AgrS.

– Case is checked outside the domain in which theta-roles are assigned.

See Hornstein a.o. (2005) for a discussion of the issues above.

The LF structure after Merge and Move operations is shown below with an intransitive verb:

CP
(Spec, C)   C¹
                C   TP

[Nom.case] →   Subj   T¹

$\begin{bmatrix} \text{Assign Nom.case} \\ \text{check AgrS} \end{bmatrix}$ →   T   vP

[Theta-role] →   ~~Subj~~   v¹

$\begin{bmatrix} \text{Assign external} \\ \text{argument} \end{bmatrix}$ →   [Vv]   VP
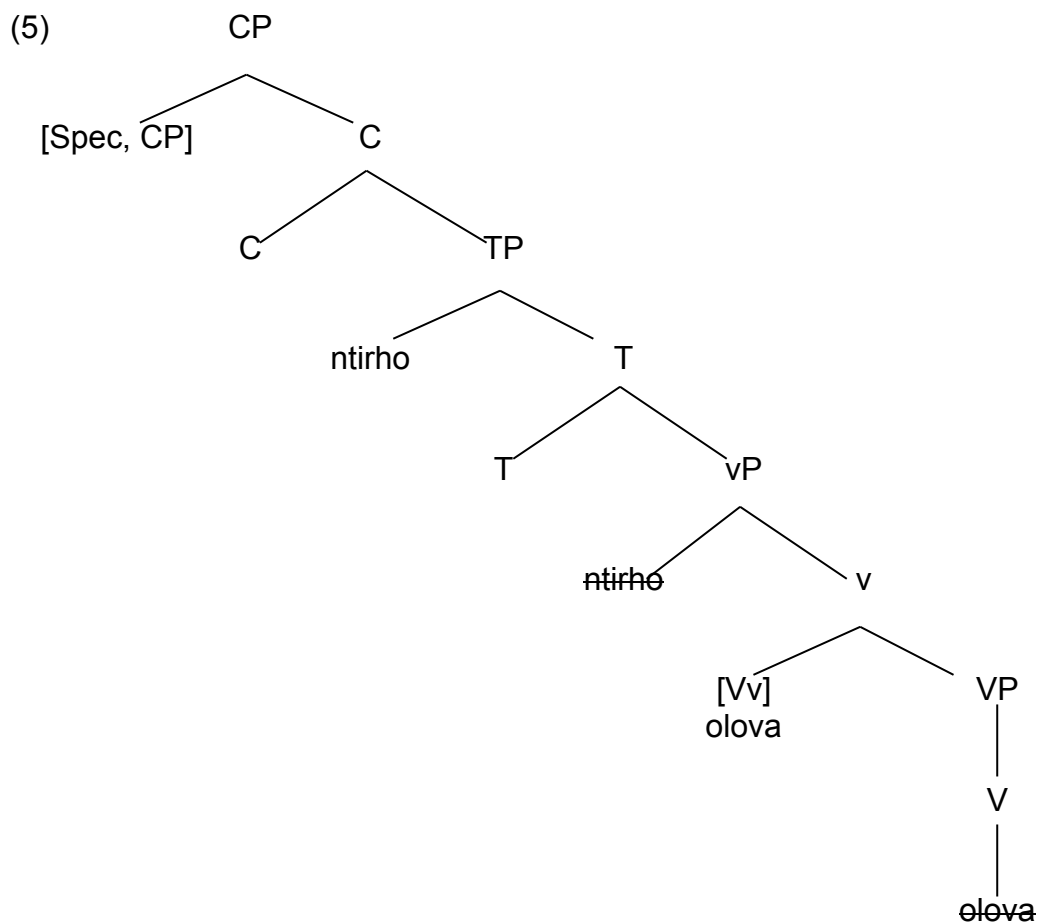   [vb]
                                                              ~~V~~
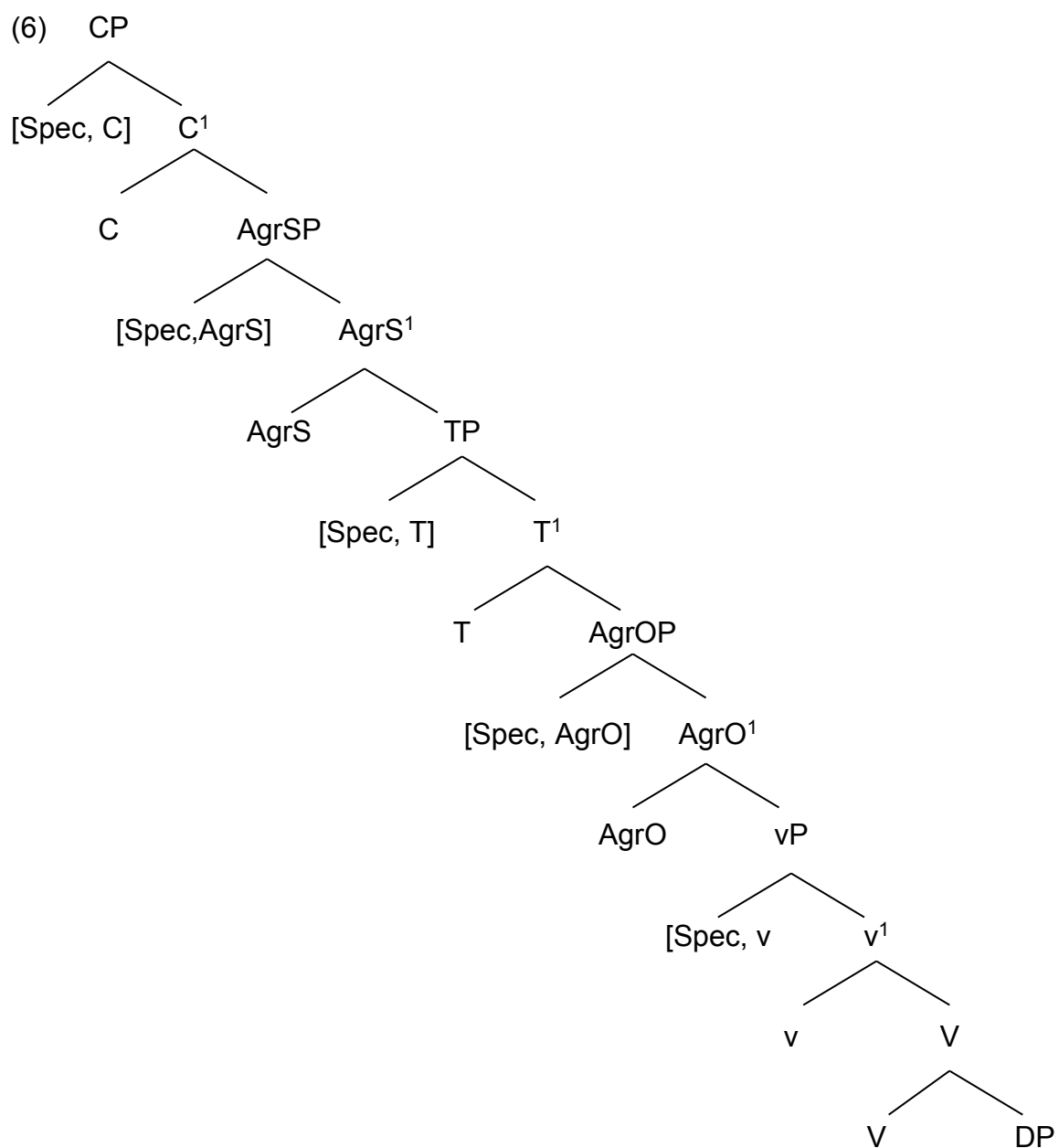
An example sentence is shown below with an intransitive verb:

(4)   Xitsonga: Ntirho wu-olov-ile
                          (Work agr-be.easy-perf)

The LF structure with the sentence above will look as follows:

(5)

```
                    CP
              _____|_____
         [Spec, CP]        C
                      _____|_____
                     C          TP
                           _____|_____
                        ntirho          T
                                    _____|_____
                                   T          vP
                                         _____|_____
                                      n̶t̶i̶r̶h̶o̶          v
                                                   _____|_____
                                                [Vv]         VP
                                                olova         |
                                                              V
                                                              |
                                                            o̶l̶o̶v̶a̶
```
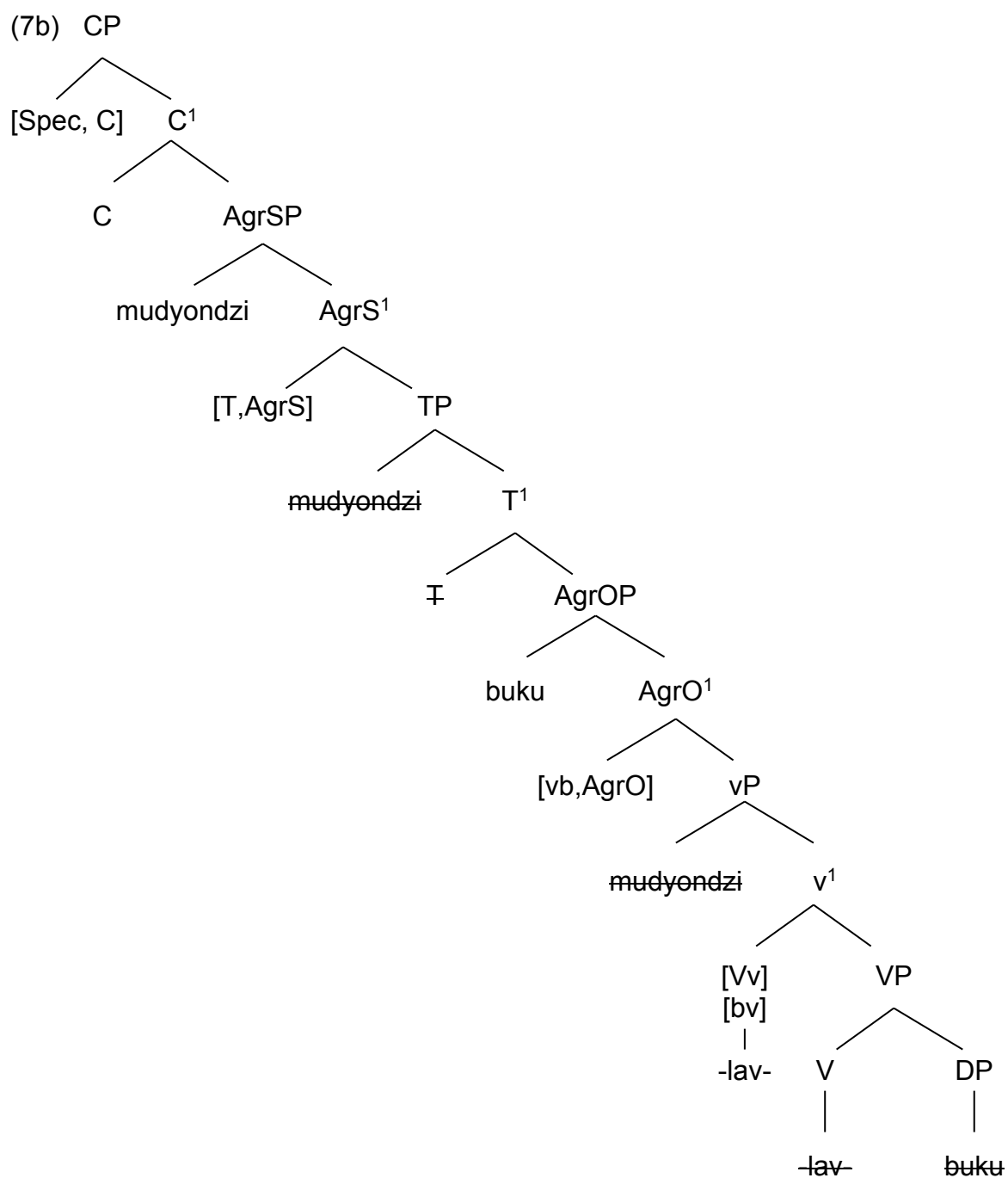
In the African languages of South Africa (i.e. which are Bantu) the agreement morphemes (AgrS and AgrO) have to appear in sentence structures, i.a. because they always have a presence in the lexicon. The structures above will then be modified to include the agreement features:
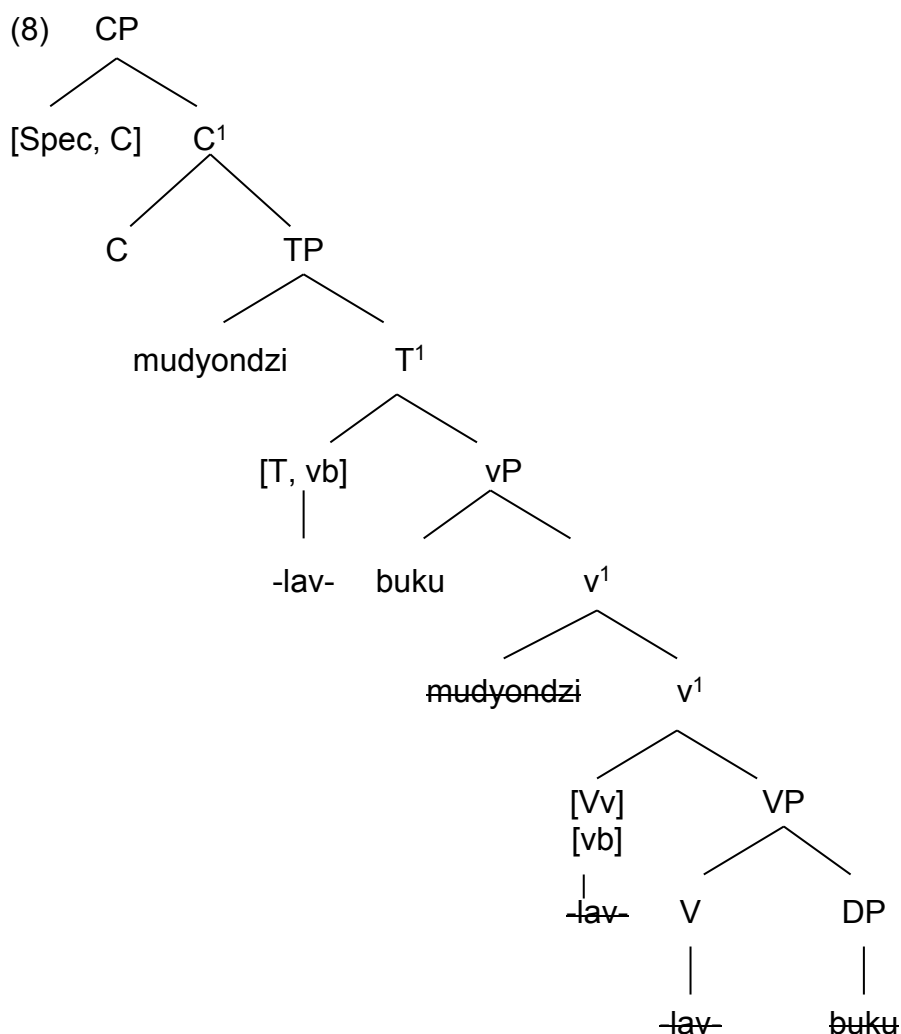
(6)   CP

```
[Spec, C]     C¹
                 /\
                C    AgrSP
                     /\
            [Spec,AgrS]     AgrS¹
                            /\
                       AgrS    TP
                              /\
                     [Spec, T]     T¹
                                   /\
                                  T    AgrOP
                                       /\
                              [Spec, AgrO]     AgrO¹
                                               /\
                                          AgrO     vP
                                                   /\
                                          [Spec, v     v¹
                                                        /\
                                                       v    V
                                                            /\
                                                           V    DP
```

The LF structure with a sentence in Xitsonga such as the following will be shown below:

(7a)   Xitsonga: Mudyondzi u-lav-a buka
                     (Student agr-want-FV book)

(7b) CP

```
              CP
            /    \
   [Spec, C]      C¹
                /    \
               C      AgrSP
                    /      \
             mudyondzi      AgrS¹
                          /      \
                   [T,AgrS]       TP
                                /    \
                         mudyondzi    T¹
                                     /    \
                                    T      AgrOP
                                         /      \
                                     buku        AgrO¹
                                               /      \
                                        [vb,AgrO]      vP
                                                     /    \
                                              mudyondzi    v¹
                                                          /    \
                                                       [Vv]      VP
                                                       [bv]     /    \
                                                        |       V      DP
                                                      -lav-     |      |
                                                              -lav-   buku
```

– The light verb [v] licenses a specifier and it assigns an external theta-role to it.

– The [V] assigns an internal argument to the DP (buku)

– [vb, AgrO] assigns accusative case to [buku]

– [T, AgrS] assigns nominative case to [mudyondzi]

Without Agr the structure above would be as follows:

(8)   CP

[Spec, C]   C^1

  C TP

   mudyondzi T^1

    [T, vb] vP

     -lav- buku v^1

      ~~mudyondzi~~ v^1

       [Vv] VP
       [vb]

       ~~-lav-~~ V DP

         ~~-lav-~~ ~~buku~~

- The light verb [v] licenses two specifiers [buku, mudyondzi], it assigns the external theta-role to **mudyondzi** and it checks the accusative case of **buku** and AgrO under the Spec-head relation.

- The verb [V] assigns the internal argument to **buku**.

- The head T assigns nominative case and checks AgrS.

2.   THE EXTERNAL ARGUMENT

For an overview of the external argument in these African languages, see i.a. Du Plessis a.o. (1992, 1995, 1996). There are various problematic issues with the external argument which is usually occupied by the subject of the clause. Only one issue will be highlighted here because others will receive attention in later sections. The issue which is of interest here is the question of word order. These African languages all have a word order of [SVO] as evidenced in the examples above. However, as will be evidenced in the section on Information Structure, the Nguni languages such as isiXhosa and isiZulu favour two positions for the subject with Xitsonga with one position:

- The first position is the normal initial position in the [SVO] word order:

(9)   IsiXhosa: [limvula] zi-nqab-ile
      (Rains agrs-be.scarce-perf: Rains are scarce)

Xitsonga: [Vana[va-karhar-ile
(Children agrs-be.tired-perf:
(The children are tired)

In this sentence, the external argument is [iimvula] and [vana] and it occupies the normal position of a topic in the word order [SVO].

However, in the Nguni languages the subject argument is frequently moved to a position after the verb:

(10)   IsiXhosa: [U-hamb-ile [yena umntwana wakwaDiliza]
(Agrs-go-perf he child of-place-of-Diliza: He went away he the child of Diliza's place)

In the sentence above, the subject argument appears after the verb to effect focus on the subject. This is a very common feature of the Nguni languages because of the influence of the Khoi-languages on Nguni. However, this phenomenon may occur in any of the other African languages but it is not that frequent. It is possible to dislocate these subjects because of the presence of the AgrS morpheme in the sentence above.

For an overview of the issues concerning argument structure see i.a. Reuland a.o. (eds.) (2007).

3.   INTRANSITIVE VERBS

Intransitive verbs are distinguished as unergative and unaccusative verbs. Unergative verbs are also regarded as a sub-species of transitive predicates. An intransitive verb refers to a verb which cannot take a direct object. However, as is clear from the discussion below, many verbs can have both a transitive and an intransitive use. An example of an intransitive verb is the following:

(11)   Xitsonga: Movha wu-tshwuk-ile
(Motorcar agr-be.red-perf: The motorcar is red)

For a discussion on intransitive verbs in the African languages see i.a. Du Plessis a.o. (1992, 1995, 1996).

3.1   Unaccusative verbs

Unaccusative verbs are generally characterized in terms of three properties (see Burzio, 1986). These verbs select an internal argument which is patient or theme, they do not assign an external theta role, and they lack the property of assigning accusative case to the internal argument. Consequently the internal argument has to move to the subject position, where it receives nominative case. The sentence in (a) for example, has the following derivation in (b) and (c):

(12) a. Ndzilo w-a-pfurh-a
          (Fire agr-LF-burn-FV: The fire burns)

    b. [$_{VP}$ V DP]

    c.

The verb **–pfurh-** 'burn' selects one internal argument, **ndzilo** 'fire' but it is unable to assign accusative Case to this argument. Hence the argument must move to the subject position where it is assigned nominative Case: [ndzilo [$_{VP}$ furha ~~ndzilo~~]]

The second **ndzilo** will be deleted in the phonological component.

The inability of the surface subject argument to be de-externalised in passive verb constructions serves as a diagnostic for establishing unaccusativity. This unaccusative diagnostic is demonstrated in the following sentence:

(13) *K-a-pfurh-w-a hi ndzilo
       there-L-Pres-burn-Pass-Pres by-fire
       'There is being burnt by the fire'

If the NP **ndzilo** 'fire' were an external argument of the verb it would have been possible for it to occur as a de-externalised argument in passives.

Weather verbs are also unaccusative verbs except in Tsonga where the passive is allowed:

(14) Mpfula ya-n-a (Rain rains: rain agrs.LF-rain-FV))
       Ka-n-iw-a hi mpfula (There is being rained by rain: expl.LF-rain-pass-FV by rain)

3.2   Intransitive ideophones

For a discussion on ideophones, see i.a. Gxowa (1994), Malima (1993), Molotsi (1993), Neethling (1972) and Nokele (1996).

Ideophones are onomatopoetic words. They are introduced into the structure of sentences by means of the verb **ri**. This verb has no meaning but it is related to the verb of saying. The **ri** which is used with ideophones is the carrier of inflection including mood, tense, agreement but also derivative affixes. Syntactically the verb **ri** and the ideophone form a unit as one predicate which may then take arguments depending on the status of the ideophone. In intransitive constructions this predicate will be a one-place predicate:

(15)   Mhitlwa yi-ri **dlu** exidziveni
         (The waterbuck plunges into the pool: waterbuck agrs-ri plunge in-pool)

The verb **ri** may appear with the Infinitive **ku** or the Infinitive morpheme **ku** may appear without **ri**:

(16)   Mhitlwa yi ku-ri **dlu** exidziveni
         Mhitlwa yi ku **dlu** exidziveni
         (The waterbuck plunges into the pool)

Ideoplones derived from verbs may appear in constructions as the above:

(17)   A ku **ngheniyani** enyangweni
         (He entered at the door)

Alternatively the ideophone may be introduced by the morpheme **lo** with inflection:

(18)   A-lo **nyi** hi thyaka
         (He was covered with mud)

         Yindlu a-yi-lo **dla** lahaya
         (The house was in the open over there)

3.3   Intransitive verbs with a cognate object

Intransitive verbs may frequently appear with a cognate object. In all of these cases the intransitive verbs are now transitive verbs because they accept the two diagnostics for an object i.e. objectival agreement and passivization:

Weather verbs with cognate objects

Weather verbs frequently appear with cognate objects and such objects allow objectival agreement and passivization:

Weather verbs with cognate objects (see Mdumela (1996):

(19)   [Mpfula] yi-na [xihangu]
           (Rain rain hail)

           [Mpfula] yi-na [mirubi]
           (Rain rain continuous-rain)

           Mpfula yi-na ndhambi
           (Rain rain heavy-rain/heavy)

Mpfula yi-nthona mathonsi
(Rain drops drops)

Moya wu-hunga xirhami
(Wind blows cold)

Mheho yi-hunga hunguva
(Strong-wind blows fog)

Mberha wu-mbuluka nkungwa
(Dew swirl mist)

Tilo ri-hatima rihati
(Sky flashes lightning)

Dyambu ri-tlhava masana
(Sun rises sunlight)

Moya wu-hunga ximbhembhe
(Wind blows storm-wind)

Moya wu-hunga bubutsa
(Wind blows dust-storm)

Moya wu-hunga xihuhuri
(Wind blows swirlwind)

These constructions may appear with object agreement:

(20)   [Mpfula] ya-[yi]-na [ndhambi]
        (Rain, does rain it flood)

        [Mpfula] ya-[xi]-na [xihangu]
        (Rain does rain it, hail)

        [Moya] wa-[xi]-hunga [xirhami]
        (Wind does blow it cold)

The cognate objects above may also appear in passive sentences:

(21) a. (i)   Mpfula yi-na ndhambi
                (Rain rain floods/heavy rain)

          (ii) [Ndhambi] yi-niwa hi mpfula
                (Heavy-rain is rained by rain)

      b. (i)   Mpfula yi-na xihangu
                (Rain rain hail)

          (ii) [Xihangu] xi-niwa hi mpfula
                (Hail is rained by rain)

      c. (i)   Mpfula yi-nthona mathosi
                (Rain drops drops)

        (ii)   [Mathonsi] ya-nthoniwa hi mpfula
             (Drops are dropped by rain)

   d. (i)   Moya wu-hunga xirhami
             (Wind blows cold)

        (ii)   [Xirhami] xi-hungiwa hi moya
             (Cold is blown by wind)

   e. (i)   Mheho yi-hunga hunguva
             (Strong-wind blows fog)

        (ii)   [Hunguva] yi-hungiwa hi mheho
             (Fog is blown by strong-wind)

   f. (i)   Mberha wu-mbuluka nkungwa
             (Dew swirl mist)

        (ii)   [Nkungwa] wu-mbulukiwa hi mbherha
             (Mist is swirled by dew)

3.4   Intransitive verb classes

Verbs relating to the body with cognate objects

Verbs of bodily processes

Intransitive verbs

ntslikula (hiccup) (ntsikwani)
hefemuteka (gasp, sigh)
hona (snore) (xingorho)
ahlamula (yawn)
rila (cry, weep)
entshemula (sneeze)
hlanta (vomit)
bodlha (belch)
hefemula (breathe)
khohlola (cough), sindzekela (sindzekelo)
thula (spit) (marhi)
nyuka (sweat) (nyuku)
mita (swallow)
tshwuta (spit)
dzuka (perspire, sweat)
tlhaka muteka (be out of breath)
ri hefu (recover one's breath)
ri hefuhefu (be out of breath)

Verbs of bodily damage

Intransitive verbs

hlala (convulse)
rhurhumela (shiver)

titimela (be cold)
letemuka (faint (from hunger)
solovanya (writhe)
tshombonyoka (writhe)
khwita (be lame)
ntlikula (be nauseous)
hlamukana (be nauseous)
fehla (itch)
hlohlonya (itch)
nwayisa (itch)
fa, hlala, suva (die)
vava (hurt, ache, be sore)
vabya (be ill)
suleka (be sprained)
pfimba (swell)
nyeka (suppurate)
tsana (be weak)
timisa (endure pain)
xinyata (bear up in pain)
tluleta (be contagious)

Verbs ending on [l/t]:

titivala (be unconscious)
titivata (make unconscious)
lamala (be crippled)
lamata (cripple)

Verbs ending on [k/l]

konyomuka (be dislocated)
konyomula (dislocate)
dzuvuka (be bald)
dzuvula (make bald)

State verbs

FIERCE

leva (V):   Mbyana yi-lev-ile
                                  (dog AgrS-fierce-pf: the dog is fierce)

TIRED

karhala (V):   Vana va-karhar-ile
                                  (children AgrS-tired-pf: the children are tired)

DAMP, MOIST

thamba (V):   Lapi ri-thamb-ile
                                  (cloth AgrS-damp-pf: the cloth is damp)

DRY, DRY UP

oma (V):   Misava yi-om-ile
(soil AgrS-dry-pf: the soil is dry)

phya (V):   Nambu wu-phy-ile
(river AgrS-dry-pf: the river dried up)

WET

tsakama (V):   Swiambalo swi-tsakam-ile
(Clothes AgrS-wet-pf: the clothes are wet)

RIPE

tsevetana (V):   Mihandzu yi-tsevetan-ile
(fruit AgrS-ripe-pf: the fruit is ripe)

HIGH

tlakuka (V):   Xitulu xi-tlakuk-ile
(chair AgrS-high-pf: the chair is high)

LONG

leha (V):   Rhambu ri-leh-ile
(bone AgrS-long-pf: the bone is long)

CRUEL

ni nsele (PP):   Wanuna loyi u ni nsele
(man this AgrS with cruelty: this man is cruel)

DARK

swihala (V):   Vusiku byi-swihar-ile
(night AgrS-dark-pf: the night is dark)

WILD

poss nhova (poss):   Hanci i r-a-nhova
(horse copula AgrS-poss-wilderness: the horse is wild)

TAME

thambha (V):   Hanci ri-thambh-ile
(horse AgrS-tame-pf: the horse is tame)

EMPTY

chululeka (V):   mbita yi-chulul-ek-ile
(pot AgrS-empty-neut-pf: the pot is empty)

FULL

tala (V):
Saka ri-tele
(bag AgrS-full-pf: the bag is full)

COLD, COOL

titimela (V):
Mati ya-titimer-ile
(water AgrS-cold-pf: the water is cold)

hola (V):
N'wana loyi u-hor-ile
(child this AgrS-cold-pf: this child is cool)

WARM, HOT

kufumela (V):
Mati ya-kufumer-ile
(water AgrS-hot-pf: the water is hot)

hisa (V):
Dyambu r-a-his-a
(sun AgrS-pres-hot-fv: the sun is hot)

WEAK

tsana (V):
Wanuna loyi u-tsan-ile
(Man this AgrS-weak-pf: this man is weak)

Xh.:   **buthathaka** (nom adj): Le ndoda i-buthathaka

STRONG

tiya (V):
Wanuna loyi u-tiy-ile
(man this AgrS-strong-pf: this man is strong)

LAME

khwita (V):
Wanuna loyi u-khwit-ile
(Man this AgrS-lame-pf: this man is lame)

LEAN, THIN

ondza (V):
Ndzi-ondz-ile
(I-lean-pf: I am lean)

FAT

nona (V):
Tihomu ti-non-ile
(cattle AgrS-fat-pf: the cattle are fat)

BETTER

-antswa (V):
Sw-a-antsw-a ku-tirha laha
(AgrS-pres-better-fv to-work here: it is better to work here)

BLIND

dlaya mahlo (VP):
Munhu loyi u-dlay-ile mahlo
(person this AgrS-kill-pf eyes: this person is blind)

BAD, UGLY

-biha (V):

Vanhu lava va-bih-ile
(people these AgrS-bad-pf: these people are bad)

BEAUTIFUL

saseka (V):

Wansati loyi u-sas-ek-ile
(woman this AgrS-beautify-neut-pf: this woman is

HEAVY

tika (V):

Nsimbi yi-tik-ile
(iron AgrS-heavy-pf: the iron is heavy)

LIGHT

vevuka (V):

Saka ri-vevuk-ile
(bag AgrS-light-pf: the bag is light)

NICE

nandziha (V):

Swakudya swi-nandzih-ile
(Food AgrS-nice-pf: the food is nice)

ROT

bola (V):

Mihandzu yi-bor-ile
(fruit AgrS-rot-pf: the fruit is rotten)

NOISY

woworheka (V):

Vanhu lava v-a-woworhek-a
(people these AgrS-pres-noisy-fv: these people are
noisy)

QUIET

rhula (V):

Vanhu lava va-rhur-ile
(people these AgrS-quiet-pf: these people are quiet)

SATIATED

xurha (V):

Ndzi-xurh-ile
(I-satiated-pf: I am satiated)

HUNGRY

twa ndlala (VP):

Ndzi-tw-a ndlala
(I-feel-fv hunger: I am hungry)

SOFT

tseveteka (V):

Mihandzu yi-tsevet-ek-ile
(fruit AgrS-soft-neut-pf: the fruit is soft)

olova (V): Mihandzu yi-olov-ile
(fruit AgrS-soft-pf: the fruit is soft)

HARD

tsotsomba (V): Misava yi-tsotsomb-ile
(soil AgrS-hard-pf: the soil is hard)

EASY

olova (V): Ntirho wu-olov-ile
(work AgrS-easy-pf: the work is easy)

DIFFICULT

nonoha (V): Ku-nonoh-ile exikolweni
(AgrS-difficult-pf in-school: it is difficult in school)

POOR

pfumala (V): Vanhu lava va-pfumar-ile
(People these AgrS-poor-pf: these people are poor)

RICH

fuwa (V): Vanhu lava va-fuw-ile
(people these AgrS-rich-pf: these people are rich)

NARROW

lala (V): Gondzo ri-lar-ile
(road AgrS-narrow-pf: the road is narrow)
khuma (V): Nomu wu-khum-ile
(mouth AgrS-narrow-pf: mouth is narrow)

WIDE

anama (V): Gondzo ri-anam-ile
(road AgrS-wide-pf: the road is wide)

COWARDLY

ni vutoya (PP): Wanuna loyi u-ni-vutoya
man this AgrS-with-cowardness: this man is cowardly)

BRAVE

ni vunhenha (PP): Masocha ya ni vunhenha
(soldiers AgrS with bravery: the soldiers are brave)

SHARP

kariha (V): Mukwana wu-karih-ile
(knife AgrS-sharp-pf: the knife is sharp)

hlontswa (V):   Mukwana wu-hlontsw-ile
(knife AgrS-sharp-pf: the knife is sharp)

NEW, YOUNG

ntshwa (adj):   Swiambalo swi-ntshwa
(clothes AgrA-new: the clothes are new)

OLD

dyuhala (V):   Wansati loyi u-dyuhar-ile
(woman this AgrS-old-pf: this woman is old)

hlakala (V):   Swiambalo swi-hlakar-ile
(clothes AgrS-wear.out-pf: clothes are old)

CLEAN, PURE

tenga (V):   Mati ya-teng-ile
(water AgrS-clean-pf: the water is clean)

DIRTY

basuluka (V):   Swiambalo swi-basuluk-ile
(clothes AgrS-dirty-pf: the clothes are dirty)

SHALLOW

na ku-enta (PP):   Mati ya-nga-na-ku-ent-a
(water AgrS-neg-with-to-deep-fv: the water is not
deep (shallow)

DEEP

enta (V):   Mati ya-ent-ile
(water AgrS-deep-pf: the water is deep)

4.   TRANSITIVE VERBS

For a structure of clauses with a transitive verb, see no. (6-8) above.

4.1 Word order

Xitsonga is a SVO language in which the object follows the verb:

(22)   [N'wana] u-lava [malekere]
                S   V   O
           [The child wants sweets]

This word order may be changed for various reasons of which the following two cases are frequent: objectival agreement and Focus on the object.

4.2 Focus on the object

For a discussion on focus, see i.a. Erteschik-Shir (2007), Mali (1995), Madadzhe 1997:508), Mletshe (1995:76-111), Mpeko (1992:83, 92), Tlaka (1997), Malete

(2001:307), Nemudzivhadi (1995:115). The change in word order to effect focus uses **reduplicated phrases** where the predicate is repeated. The object of the clause is then moved to a position after the repetition of the verb, but with objectival agreement on the verb.

The Dependent mood in brackets below may be used to effect focus:

(23) Ndzi-ta-n'wi-vita [ndz- n'wi-vita] mudyondzi loyi
       (I will keep on calling him this student: I-will-him-call I-him-call student this)

       Ndzi-n'wi-vitanile [ndzi-n'wi-vitana]
       (I kept on calling him: I-him-call-perf I-him-call)

       U-n'wi-langute [a-n'wi-languta]
       (She kept on looking at him: she-him-look-perf she-him-look)

       Va-yi-dye [va-yi-dya nyama leyi] vafana
       (They keep on eating this meat the young men: they-it-eat they-it-eat meat this young-men)

       N'wana loyi u-ta-yi-dyondza [a-yi-dyondza] buku leyi
       (This child will keep on reading this book: child this she-will-it-read she-it-read book this)

4.3   Objectival agreement

4.3.1 Agreemend and pro

Subjectival agreement and objectival agreement occur as prefixes of the verb in morphology:

(24)   V-a-ndzi-hlek-a
                (They are laughing at me: AgrS2-lf-1ps.AgrO-laugh-fv)

va is a subjectival morpheme and **ndzi** an objectival morpheme. No overt NP subject or object occur. In such cases the null subject or object parameter appears. Phonologically empty pronominals, indicated as **pro**, may contain the grammatical features of pronouns, i.e. person, number and gender and they may appear as subject or object in the structure of sentences:

(25) [pro$_i$]v$_i$-a-ndzi$_j$-hleka [pro$_j$]

The subject **pro** is coindexed with AgrS **va** and the object pro with AgrO **ndzi**.

4.3.2   AgrO with a lexical object

It is possible for a lexically realized object to co-occur with object agreement without the presence of comma-intonation after the verb. This kind of co-occurrence of a lexical object with the object agreement morpheme is correlated with a specific semantic effect of emphasis which is absent when the lexical object is preceded by comma-intonation. In Xitsonga the object clitic does not regularly co-occur with a lexical object NP in postverbal position. An NP associated with the object clitic regularly occurs in a sentence initial topic position in these languages.

The objectival agreement may co-occur with an object that is lexically realized in the nguni languages. This is exactly parallel to the case where the subject will be lexically realized:

Zulu:

(26) Amadoda a-ya-yi-hlaba imvu
      (The men are slaughtering the sheep: men agrs-LF-agro-slaughter sheep))

The agreement morpheme coindexed with **amadoda** is **a** and with **imvu** it is **yi**. However, the issue is more complicated than a simple problem of agreement in the case of **yi**. Such sentences have two distinguishing semantic features of emphasis which is not present when the AgrO is not used:

(27) a. Amadoda a-hlaba imvu
          (The men are slaughtering a sheep)

      b. Amadoda a-ya-yi-hlaba imvu
          (The men do slaughter a sheep)

In (a) without the AgrO **yi** this semantic feature is not present. It seems then as if structures like (b) with AgrO together with a **lexical** object have to be dealt with within the broader framework of a theory of **focus** where **imvu** in (b) is thus in a focus position. This semantic feature of emphasis appears with a present tense above.

The noun phrase appearing as object of a verb in Xitsonga does not regularly appear with objectival agreement if this noun phrase has some lexical content.

(28) [pro$_i$] ndz$_i$-a-yi$_j$-dy-a [nyama$_j$]
      (pro 1sgAgrS-LF-9AgrO-eat-FV 9meat: I do eat meat)

Although these sentences are not regarded as ungrammatical, it is usually interpreted in such a way that the object **nyama** is to be regarded to be in a special focus position. A pause can be found between the verb **dya** and the object **nyama** i.e. a comma-intonation:

(29) ndz-a-yi-dya, nyama

The object **nyama** regularly appears in a topic position in front of the sentence:

(30) [nyama$_i$] [pro$_j$ ndz$_j$-a-yi$_i$-dy-a [pro$_i$]
      (9Meat pro 1sgAgrS-LF-9AgrO-eat-fv: meat I eat it)

The topic NP **nyama** is coindexed with the objectival agreement morpheme **yi** which is in turn coindexed with an empty pro: The topic NP must be associated with objectival agreement in the morphology of the verb.

4.3.3 Stylistic movement

See also Mletshe (1995), Tlaka (1997) and Nemudzivhadi (1995).

Once the structure has been established with both subjectival and objectival agreement, the lexical subject and object may appear anywhere in the sentence. This is a type of movement of noun phrases but this movement does not take place

within the syntax. It is regarded as stylistic movement and is usually dealt with in the phonological component.

A simple sentence may theoretically have six different alternate forms depending on where the subject and object have moved:

(31) a. Vana v-a-swi-lava swakudya
       (Children they want it food: children agrs-LF-AgrO-want food))

  b. V-a-swi-lava vana swakudya

  c. Vana swakudya v-a-swi-lava

  d. Swakudya v-a-swi-lava vana

  e. V-a-swi-lava swakudya vana

  f. Swakudya vana v-a-swi-lava

These different sentences, all with the same meaning but dependent on previous discourse and/or emphasis, are made possible because of the presence of two different agreement morphemes: a subjectival agreement morpheme **va** and an objectival agreement morpheme **swi**.

It must be noted that the different alternations are only possible because the subject and object have different class features. If these two belong to the same class, the alternations would not be possible:

(32) Wansati w-a-n'wi-vona nhwanyana
     (The woman sees her the girl)

The subject and the object belong to class 1 and thus share the same agreement.

4.4 Coordinated objects

For coordination see i.a. Mahlomaholo (1993), Moloto (1992), Ramaliba (1992), Sineke (1997) and Siwundla (1987).

The syntactic object may be a coordinated noun phrase. Coordinated noun phrases may use a conjunct in structures like the following:

(33) DP le DP

Coordinated DPs may be generated without any problem.

The structure above presents problems when objectival agreement has to be addressed. The verb will then have AgrO which will have to agree with the coordinated noun phrase.

In the first place, if one of the coordinated NP's is a member with the feature [first person], either singular or plural, then the coordinated NP will have the features [first person, plural]:

(34) Va-hi-lava [mina na wena]
     (They want us me and you)

When one of the coordinated NP's is in the second person without any first person being present in the coordination, the coordinated NP will be second person plural:

(35) Va-mi-hleva [wena na wanuna]
       (They are gossiping about you you and the man)

If both members of the coordination have the feature [human] the agreement will be class 2:

(36) Ndza-**va**-vona [mufana na wunana]
       (I see them the young man and the man)

When they are both [-human] the plural agreement of one of the nouns may be accepted:

(37) Va-**swi**-xavile [xinkwa na mihandzu]
       (They bought them bread and fruit)

Or the agreement issue may be resolved through emphasis. The clitic will have the agreement of the emphasized NP, whichever it is:

(38) a.   A-ndzi-**xi**-voni [xihari na murhi]
            (I don't see it the wild animal and the tree)

      b.   A-ndzi-**wu**-voni [murhi na xihari]
           (I don't see it the wild animal and the tree)

When one of the coordinated NP's is human and the other non-human, the clitic will only accept the agreement of the NP with the feature [human]:

(39) Ndza-**n'wi**-vona [wanuna na hanci]
       (I see him the man and the horse)

It may frequently happen that one of the coordinated NP's is not used, but is implied:

(40)   Hi ximumu ndzi-nwa wayini yo basa kambe hi xixika ndzi-nwa [na wayini yo
         tshwuka]
(In summer I drink white wine but in winter I drink also red wine)

4.5 Locative noun phrases

Locative noun phrases used to have heads with their own noun class and as such they appeared in all different positions in a clause. The locative noun has mostly lost this ability although some remnants of this use can still be detected. Thus, a locative noun phrase may appear as the object of the verb but under certain conditions. Firstly, the verb has to be an abstract verb and not a concrete verb.

Secondly, the agreement **ku** must appear with the object and be coindexed with it.

(42) :   a.   Ndza-**ku**-tiva [eCape Town]
                       (I know it in Cape Town)

                b.   Ndza-**ku**-chava [lahaya ehansi ka ntshava]
                       (I am afraid there at the bottom of the mountain)

4.6 Nominal infinitives

See i.a. Sadiki (1992), Tshithukhe (1997), Tunzelana (1993) and Motaung (1991).

Nominal Infinitives are nouns derived from verbs. As such these verbs retain their argument structure. The subject is to be found in a possessive phrase while the syntactic object takes the position after this possessive phrase in surface structure. All Nominal Infinitives are furthermore morphologically marked with a prefix:

(42) a. [Ku-yimbelela ka vona risimu] ka-tsakisa swinene
(Their singing a song is very nice)

b. [Ku-ba ka mudyondzisi vana] ku-terisa vusiwana/swa-vavisa
(The teacher's hitting of the children is sad)

The complement **risimu** retains its status as syntactic object even though it is no longer adjacent to the verb. It can be seen from the Agro of this object when it is placed on the verb **yimbelela:**

(43) [Ku-**ri-**yimbelela ka vona [risimu]
(Their singing of it the song)

4.7 The sentential pronoun as object

There is a sentential pronoun whose reference is some sentence in discourse. This pronoun may appear together with a demonstrative pronoun. The objectical agreement of class 8 **swi** may occur with the demonstrative **leswo**:

(44) a. Vanhu lava va-dyaka vanhu namuntlha lava nga emahlweni ka hina, va-**swi-**endlile hikwalaho ka ndala
(These people who are today cannibals who are before us, they did that because of hunger)

b. Vakulukhumba vamufana loko va-n'wi-vona a-endla **leswo**, va-hleketile ku-n'wi-lavela nsati
(The elders of the young man when they saw him doing that, they decided to look for a wife for him)

c. Nomsa u-feyirile xikambelo. Tatana u-**swi-**twile
(Nomsa failed the examination. Father heard it)

4.8 Subject and object in the relative clause

See also Makgopa (1996), Mathalauga (1997), Mletshe (1995), Legodi (1995), Mabaso (1996), Nxumalo (1994) and Tsanwani (1997).

Of interest seems to be the compulsory presence of AgrO on the verb in the relative clause. It is a necessary condition of all relative clauses that the antecedent must be present in the relative clause in one way or another. It can be done in various ways, i.a. through the presence of AgrO:

(45) U-twisisa **mhaka** [leyi mudyondzisi a-**yi-**vulavulaka?]
(Do you understand thing which the teacher is speaking it?)

The antecedent is **mhaka** and this antecedent is present in the relative clause through its coindexed clitic **yi** on the verb **vulavula**.

The object of a relative verb may be moved through intrusion of a PP.

(46) Xi kwihi xihloka [lexi mufana loyi a-tsemaka [hi xona] muthi]?
(Where is the axe with which this chap is cutting the tree?)

The PP **hi xona** has intruded between the verb **tsema** and the object **murhi.**

4.9 Passive

In passive sentences the verb appears with the passive morpheme [-w-] and the object may be copied on the subject position:

(47) [Swakudya] swi-dy-iw-ile [~~swakudya~~]
[Food AgrS-eat-pass-perf ~~food~~: the food has been eaten)

[Swakudya] has been copied in the subject position and its appearance in the object position will be deleted in the phonological component.

4.10 The Universal Quantifier

See i.a. Moletsane (1992), and Du Plessis and Visser (1992).

Certain restrictions on the use of the "long forms" of tenses may fall away with the universal Quantifier in an NP in object position.

(48) a. Ndzi-vita [vanhu hinkwavo]   b. Ndzi-**va**-vita [hinkwavo vanhu]
(I call all the children)

c. Ndz-a-va-vita [hinkwavo vana] eCape Town

Short form

(49)   *Ndzi-va-vita vana

Long form

(50) a. Ndza-**va**-vita [vana]

b. Ndzi-**va**-vitile [vana]

4.11 Transitive ideophones

See Neethling (1972), Molotsi (1993), Malima (1993), Gxowa (1994), Nokele (1996).

Ideophones are introduced into sentence structures by means of the verb **re** or **thi** which serves as bearer of Inflection and derivation. As such one may then also find ideophones in two-place predicates where one of the arguments is the syntactic object:

(51) a. A-ku swiwitsi **bon'we**
(He threw the sweets into his mouth)

  b. Va-lo-n'wi-**katla** mufana
     (They grabbed this young man)

Objectival agreement may appear in conjunction with an empty NP as pronoun or as agreement marker with a lexical object:

(52) A-**ku-mu-**nyemu [pro]
      (He gave him a dirty look)

Only the infinitive **ku** may appear above.

4.12   Verbs of contact

With Instrumental PP

STAB

-tlhava wanuna [hi mukwana]
(stab man with knife)

TOUCH

-khumba n'wana [hi xandla]
(touch child with hand)

COVER

-funengeta n'wana [hi nguvu]
(cover child with blanket)

RUB

-chukucha kumbi [hi lapi]
(rub wall with cloth)

FASTEN

-boha bokisi [hi ntambu]
(fasten box with rope)

LOOSEN

-ntshunxa ntambu [hi xandla]
(loosen rope with hand)

NIP, PINCH

-tova n'wana [hi minwala]
(pinch child with fingers)

CRASH

-chayisa murhi [hi movha]
(crash tree with-car)

SCRATCH

-nwaya nhlonge [hi matiho]
(scratch skin with fingers)

HIT

-ba wanuna [hi xivurhi]
(hit man with fist)

With locative phrase

TICKLE

-dikida n'wana [eka nhlana]
(tickle child on-back)

CARRY

-rhwala mbita [eka nhloko]
(carry pot on-head)

PULL

-koka saka [egolonyini]
(pull bag on-wagon)

PUSH

-susumeta movha [egarajini]
(push car in-garage)

KICK

-raha bolo [eka mina]
(Kick ball to me)

TREAD

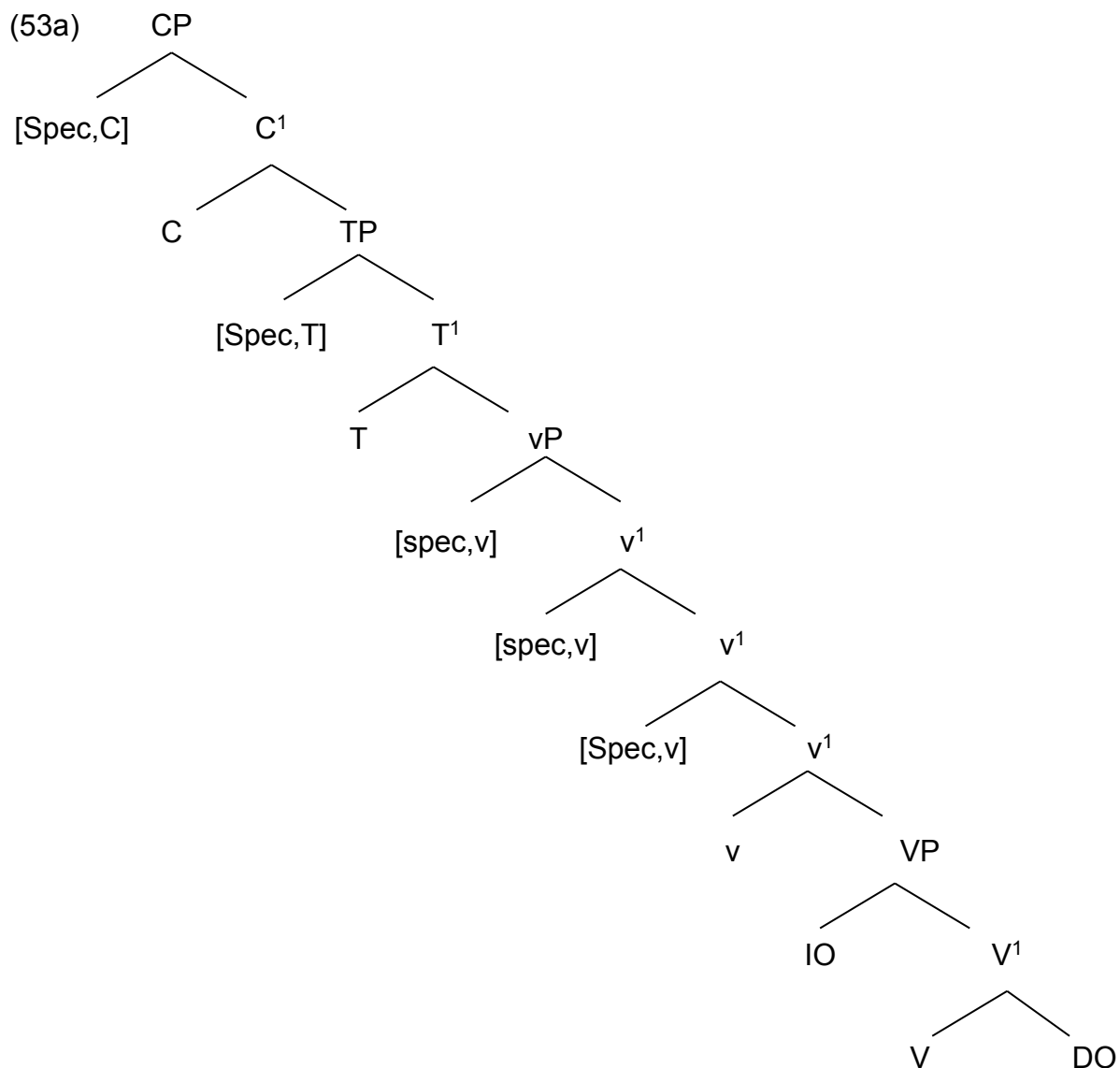-kandziya swimila [eka xirhapa]
(tread-on plants in-garden)

THROW

-hoxa buku [etafuleni]
(throw book on-table)

5.   DITRANSITIVE VERBS

See i.a. Maboya (1992:15, 34, 44), Ramone (1992), Rankhododo (1992), Mushiane (1999:61), Raphalalani (1997:63), Sepota (1992:35).
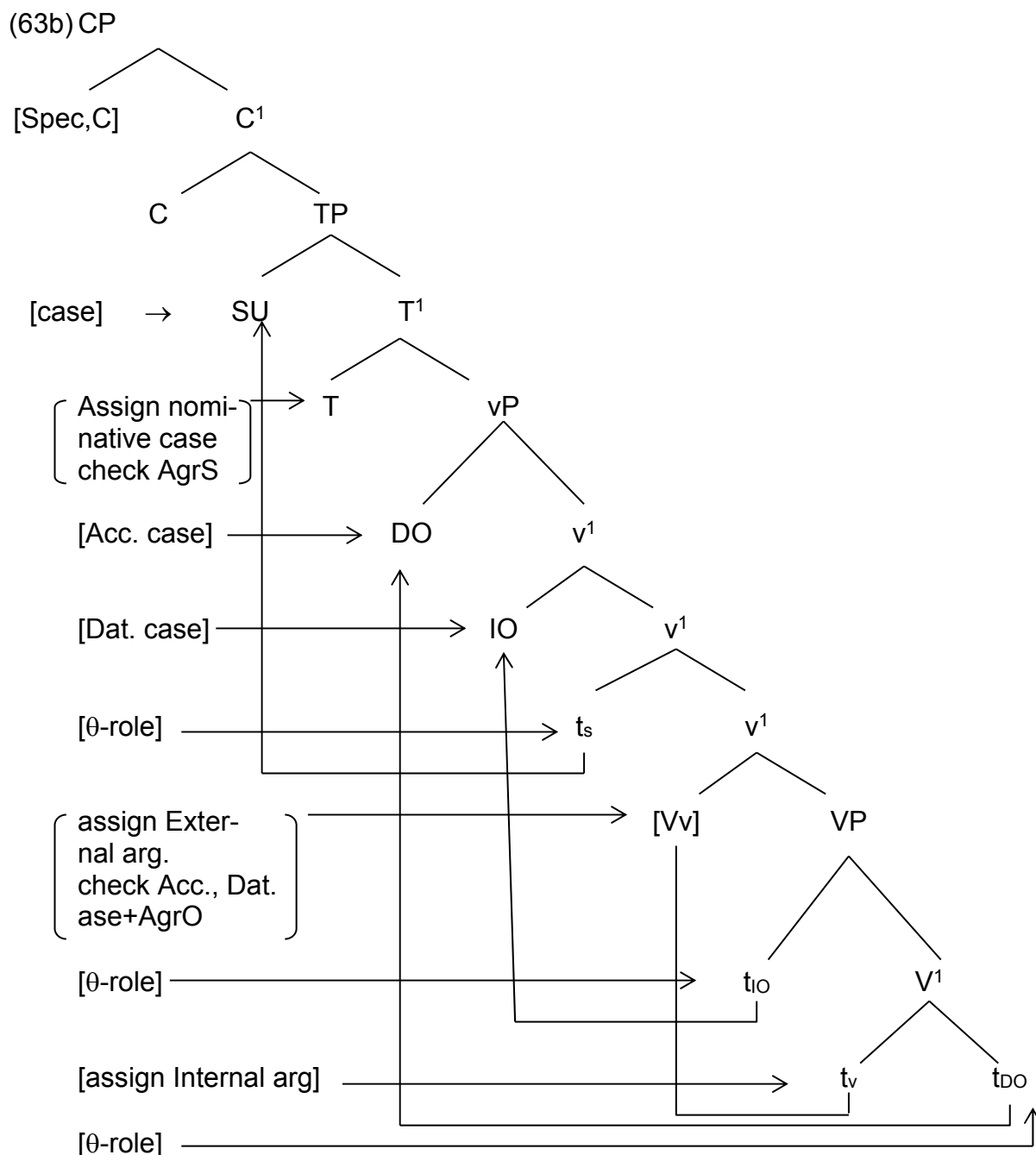
5.1   Structure

(53a)

```
            CP
          /    \
    [Spec,C]    C¹
              /    \
             C      TP
                  /    \
            [Spec,T]    T¹
                      /    \
                     T      vP
                          /    \
                    [spec,v]    v¹
                              /    \
                        [spec,v]    v¹
                                  /    \
                            [Spec,v]    v¹
                                      /    \
                                     v      VP
                                          /    \
                                        IO      V¹
                                              /    \
                                             V      DO
```

The light verb [v] licences three specifiers : [SU, IO, DO], it assigns the external θ-role and checks accusative and dative case and AgrO.

The verb [V] assigns two internal arguments.

The head T assigns nominative case and checks AgrS.

(63b) CP

```
         CP
        /  \
  [Spec,C]   C¹
            /  \
           C    TP
                / \
[case]  →     SU   T¹
                  /  \
Assign nomi-    T    vP
native case         /  \
check AgrS        DO    v¹
                       /  \
[Acc. case] →        IO    v¹
                          /  \
[Dat. case] →            tₛ   v¹
                             /  \
[θ-role]                  [Vv]   VP
                                /  \
assign Exter-                 tIO   V¹
nal arg.                           /  \
check Acc., Dat.                  tᵥ   tDO
ase+AgrO

[θ-role]

[assign Internal arg]

[θ-role]
```

Ditransitive verbs appear in predicates which have two internal arguments:

(54)   Wanuna u lomba [n'wana] [hanci]
            `The man lends a horse to the child'

These predicates thus show three arguments with an external argument as in (54). The verb **lomba** assigns two theta-roles to its complements of which the first one is usually the **recipient** and the second one the **theme**:

(55) a.   Kokwana u nyika [vana] [swakudya]
            `Grandmother gives food to the children'

    b.   Wanuna u hakela [n'anga] [homu]
            `The man pays a cow to the witch-doctor'

c.   Nhwana u tsona [vana] [swakudya]
`The girl refuses food to the child'

In these sentences in (55) the subject has the theta-role of **agent** while the noun with the feature [animate] has the theta-role of **recipient**, e.g. **vana, n'anga**.   The following noun above is **theme**, e.g. **swakudya, homu**.

The second internal argument may have the semantic role of **purpose** while the first argument adjacent to the verb may be **theme**:

(56)   Ndzi rhuma [wansati] [mali]
`I send the wife for the money (to fetch the money)'

The two internal arguments of ditransitive verbs have the grammatical function of direct and indirect object:

(57)   Tatana u nyika [vana] [swiwitsi]
`Father gives sweets to the children'

If we consider the word order of the objects in (57), the **indirect object** is the noun phrase immediately adjacent to the verb, i.e. **vana**. The direct object then follows the indirect object in word order, i.e. **swiwitsi**. In surface structures we find that these two objects may not be interchanged:

(58) a.   *Tatana u nyika [swiwitsi] [vana]   b. Tatana u nyika [vana] [swiwitsi]]

These predicates with ditransitive verbs may be found with one internal argument only, i.e. with a direct object only. The other internal argument may thus undergo **argument reduction**:

(59)   Bangi yi lomba mali
`The bank is lending/borrowing money'

Argument reduction in the case of the direct object is not quite as common, but these verbs may be found with only an indirect object:

(60) a.   Ndzi hakela vatirhi
`I am paying the workers'

b. Ndzi nyika vana
'I am giving the children (presents)'

As in the case of transitive verbs, objectival agreement may also be found with ditransitive verbs:

(61)   Xikwembu xi **n'wi** nyikile [tatana wa wena] [nkarhi wa ka ku kurisa]
`The Lord gave your father an opportunity to raise you'

Once the clitic has been established on the verb, the object which is coreferenced with this clitic may appear anywhere in the sentence:

(62)   U **wu** nyikile [ndyangu] [papila]

`He gave the letter to the family'

The clitic may also be a pronominal, coreferenced and in a chain with an empty pronominal:

(63)   Yima ndzi **ku** nyika [pro] swimatana
         `Let me give you a little water'

What seems to be problematic, is the possible semantic interpretations of the clitics of these two objects. In (63) only the indirect object has been used with a clitic. The following sentence may be used as a starting point in this investigation to see whether both objects may have objectival agreement:

(64)   Ndzi nyika [vana] [swiwitsi]
         `I give the children sweets/sweets to the children'

The verb in (64) has in Inflection the Indicative Present Tense. Firstly, only one of these objects in (64) will be replaced by a pronominal. In such a case, the clitic will be used: in (65) the indirect object **vana** in (12) will be replaced by **va** in a chain with pro:

(65)   Ndzi **va** nyika swiwitsi
         `I give the sweets to them'

The structure of (65) is represented in (66):

(66)   [pro$_i$ [AgrS$_i$-AgrO$_j$-V [pro$_j$] [NP]

The direct object in (65) may be appear with objectival agreement:

(67)   Ndzi **swi** nyika vana
         `I give them to the children'

The structure (68) is on a par with (66):

(68)   [pro$_i$ [AgrS$_i$-AgrO$_j$-V [NP] [pro$_j$]

The adverb with **ka-** may appear in different positions with ditransitive verbs. In the first place it may take the position after the two objects:

(69)   Ndzi nyika n'wana swakudya **kanyingi**
         `I give food to the child many times'

In the second place it may appear between the indirect and direct object:

(70)   Ndzi nyika n'wana **kanyingi** swakudya

With the clitic on the verb of either object it likes to take the position adjacent to the verb:

(71) a. Ndzi **n'wi** nyika **kanyingi [n'wana]** swakudya

     b. [Swakudya] ndzi **swi** nyika **kanyingi** n'wana

5.2   Ditransitive verbs in Xitsonga

Change of possession

GIVE

ha, nyika

PAY

hakela

FEED

dy-is-a

SEND

rhuma

LEND, BORROW

lomba

STINT, REFUSE FOOD

tsona

COMMUNICATION

NAME

thya

TEACH

dyondz-is-a

LEARN

dyondza

ASK

vutisa

TELL

byela

REQUEST

kombela

5.3   Dative alternation

See i.a. Theledi (1998:83), Twabu (1998:116), Mphigalale (1997:90), Mtimka (1999:65), Sepota (1999:412).

> Ndzi-nyika wansati mbita
> Ndzi-nyika mbita eka wansati
> (I give pot to woman)

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Abbreviations

Adj   Adjective
AgrA   Adjectival agreement
Agr   Agreement
C   compelementizer
DO   direct object
DP   determiner phrase
FV   final vowel
IO   indirect object
IP   Inflection phrase
LF   logical form
lf   long form (present tense)
nom   nominative

perf	perfect tense
pf	perfect tense
Spec	Specifier
subj	subject
T	Tense
t	trace
v	light verb
V	verb
vb	verb