

Split Intransitivity in Kalanga

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Abstract

*This paper examines the intransitive verb class in Kalanga, a minority language predominantly spoken in the southwestern parts of Zimbabwe. The paper focuses on split intransitivity, a linguistic concept that describes the division of intransitive verbs into two subclasses — unaccusative verbs and unergative verbs. Split intransitivity, also known as unaccusativity, was first formulated by Perlmutter (1978) under what he termed the Unaccusative Hypothesis (UH). According to the Relational Grammar (RG) framework within which split intransitivity was first investigated, the single Noun Phrase (NP) of an unaccusative verb patterns like an object of a transitive verb while the single NP of an unergative verb patterns like the subject of a transitive verb. This study tries three tests for split intransitivity in Kalanga, namely the **-ik-**, **-is-** and **-il-** verbal extensions. Some sentences which use the three verbal extensions were selected from a large corpus of Kalanga data and analysed. Kalanga speaking research assistants provided other sentences which they constructed using the three verbal extensions. The results of the study show that verbs that take the **-ik-** and the **-il-** verbal extensions are unergative. To a large extent, unaccusative verbs do not take the two verbal extensions. It is also demonstrated that the causative extension **-is-** is an unreliable test for intransitivity in Kalanga since it produces grammatical sentences when used with both kinds of intransitive verbs, including with transitive verbs.*

Introduction

The focus of this paper is split intransitivity in Kalanga. Kalanga is a minority language that is predominantly spoken in the southwestern parts of Zimbabwe (Chigwedere, 1985; Hachipola, 1998; Van Waarden, 1988; Wentzel, 1983). Not much has been studied in this language in Zimbabwe both from linguistic and literary perspectives (Hachipola, 1998). This justifies the current study on split intransitivity in this language. Split intransitivity is a concept that describes the division of intransitive verbs into two subclasses, unaccusative verbs and unergative verbs. This notion was first formalised by Perlmutter (1978) as the Unaccusative Hypothesis which states that there are two groups of the intransitive verb class, unaccusative verbs, and unergative verbs. According to the Relational Grammar (RG)

framework within which split intransitivity or unaccusativity was first couched, the single NP of an unaccusative verb is an *initial 2*, patterning like an object of a transitive verb while the single NP of an unergative verb is *initial 1*, that is, like the subject of a transitive verb. From a semantic point of view, unaccusative verbs are defined as those verbs which have arguments that are prototypically patients and unergative verbs as having arguments that are prototypically agents. These two definitions suggest that the distinction between unaccusative and unergative verbs can be accounted for partly on syntactic terms and partly on semantic terms. This is one of the areas that show the interface between syntax and semantics.

Methodology

This study is both rationalist and empirical in the sense that it relies on theoretical foundations as well as data collected from informants. Texts of different sizes were required to provide enough data for analysis. The corpus of data was collected through interviews from the following areas of the Bulilimamangwe district: Dombodema, Madlambuzi, Bambadzi, Masendu, Makulela, Hingwe, Ndiweni, Empandeni, Malanswazi and Plumtree town. The informants were identified with the help of knowledgeable research assistants from the areas visited. The research assistants were identified well before embarking on this research. The interviews were tape-recorded. The interviewees were responding to various questions that asked about the history of the Kalanga people, their language, socio-cultural activities and other topics of general interest. Tape recording was used as a method of collecting data because it provides a "...linguistically accurate corpus of data" (Samarin, 1967:8). Research assistants who were native speakers of Kalanga transcribed the tape recordings from the tapes onto paper. The research assistants were final year students of Linguistics. They also translated the Kalanga texts into English which made the analysis of split transitivity easy. The Kalanga research assistants assisted in selecting sentences which contained the *-ik-*, *-is-* and *-il-* verbal extensions from the corpus of transcribed and translated data. They further answered questions on the grammaticality of sentences when constructed using the three types of verbal extensions. The research assistants were also asked to construct sentences using the three verbal extensions. The study therefore relied on the intuition of the Kalanga speaking research assistants. About this method in linguistic research, Palmer (1981:27) observes, "Intuition and introspection must play a large part in our interpretation of language." Similarly, Hurford and Heasley (1983:7) say, "by careful thought about the language one speaks and the way it is used, definite conclusions can be arrived at concerning meaning." The researcher also used his intuition as far as Shona examples are concerned.

Theoretical Background

This paper uses partly the syntactic approach (Rosen, 1984) and partly the semantic approach (Van Valin, 1990) to split transitivity. The main reason for using the two approaches is that “it is difficult to make claims about unaccusativity in a given language unless both the syntax and the semantics of the language are well understood” (Levin and Rappaport-Hovav, 1995:16).

The syntactic approach to split intransitivity is based on Relational Grammar (RG) (Trithart, 1975; Perlmutter, 1978; Perlmutter and Rosen, 1984). The basic principle of RG framework is that, in natural languages, there exist grammatical relations, which have a crucial role to play in those languages. Grammatical relations indicate syntactic connections between a verb and the NPs that the verb takes. In other words, grammatical relations show the functional role of NPs in relation to a verb in a sentence. These relations are subject (SUBJ), direct object (DO) and indirect object (IO). The terms grammatical relation and functional relation (role) are used synonymously in this study. RG treats grammatical relations as primitives, that is, they are primary or basic entities.

Grammatical relations can be represented on a scale called the Relational Hierarchy (RH).¹ RG theorists use the RH to show the order of NPs in a construction in terms of which NP is most likely to undergo a grammatical process² or one that must undergo the process if a GR lower than it does. According to Trithart (1975) the SUBJ is the highest grammatical relation on the RH scale followed by the DO and then the IO. Perlmutter and Postal (1984)³ say the highest grammatical relation is the SUBJ while the lowest are what they call non-term relations. An example of non-term relations is the chomeur, which implies that the relation has lost its initial role; in other words it will have been relegated to a lower functional role as what happens during the process of passivisation. The two RHs are treated as complementary. The study uses the basic notion of grammatical relations being primitives that show how NPs relate to verbs in sentences. RG enables us to describe an intransitive verb as a verb that takes only one NP whose role is the SUBJ, while a transitive verb takes two NPs whose functional roles are the SUBJ and the DO.

1. Trithart (1975) proposes the following RH: SUBJ > DO > IO

The symbol > means ‘higher than’

2. A grammatical process such as passivisation.

3. Perlmutter and Postal (1984) present their RH as follows:

| | | |
|----------|------|---|
| Highest: | SUBJ | 1 |
| | DO | 2 |
| | O | 3 |

Lowest : Non term Relations = (Chomeur, Oblique Relations etc)

The two subclasses of the intransitive verb group can also be explained from a semantic point of view. According to Van Valin's (1990:221), one of the proponents of the semantic approach to unaccusativity, "the phenomena which the Unaccusative Hypothesis strives to explain in syntactic terms are better explained in semantic terms." Because of the limits of this paper, which sets out to try only three tests of unaccusativity, details of the arguments for and against both the syntactic and semantic approaches shall not be discussed here. They are well dealt with by Levin and Rappaport-Hovav (1995).

Argument Structure

It should be noted that it is impossible to make the unergative-unaccusative distinction without knowing the argument structure of verbs. Argument structure refers to the number of arguments that a verb takes in a sentence. Arguments are the participants or entities a verb takes in a sentence. In the case of intransitivity, we will be dealing with one argument and it is important to note the nature of the argument in each sentence in order to determine whether the verb is unaccusative or unergative.

For instance, the characteristics of the arguments (or NPs) in the following sentences help in classifying the verb *mela* (grow) as unaccusative and *hinga* (work) as unergative.

1. (a) *Tjimanga* *tja* *mel-* *a*
 maize AGR *germinate* TV
 (Maize has germinated).
- (b) *Tate* *ba-* *ka* *hing-* *a* *mu-* *Jobheki*
 father AGR PST *work* TV *in* *Johannesburg*
 (Father worked in Johannesburg).

Both verbs in the above constructions are intransitive, as they cannot be followed by direct objects. What is to be established is what type each intransitive verb is; that is, whether unaccusative or unergative. In order to determine this, the subject in each sentence has to be examined closely. In (1a) the NP *tjimanga* (maize) is the surface subject of the sentence. In semantic terms, this NP is a Theme as it does not initiate action but undergoes the action expressed by the verb. In the RG framework it is called *initial 2*. It can therefore be tentatively concluded that the verb *mela* (grow) in sentence (1a) is unaccusative, considering the definition of the term 'unaccusative verb' in the introduction. This, however, needs to be confirmed by some tests that are suggested in the sections below.

On the other hand, the NP *tate* (father) in (1b) is an *initial 1* of this sentence, just like the subject of a transitive verb. It is agentive in semantic

terms. This NP initiates the action expressed by the verb. It is different from the argument *tjimanga* (maize) in (1a) because the latter does not initiate the action expressed by the verb. *Tate* (father) is what in RG terms is called *initial 1*. An *initial 1* is an entity that initiates action. Therefore, it can be concluded that the verb *hinga* (work) is Unergative because the characteristics of the single NP in the construction are the same as those described in the definition of this verb class that is given in the introduction. Taking into account the explanations given above, the two Kalanga verbs may be represented as follows:

2. (a) *mela*; *initial 2/Theme* *Unaccusative*
 (b) *hinga* ; *initial 1/Agentive* *Unergative*

When this syntactic/semantic analysis is applied to sentences and phrases that contain intransitive verbs, it is possible to make a distinction between unaccusative and unergative verbs in Kalanga texts. Table 1 below shows the classification that was made from a sample of forty intransitive sentences that were selected from the corpus of Kalanga texts. What the researcher did was to look closely at the NP or argument used in each intransitive sentence. Sentences that contained *initial 1* type of NPs or agentive arguments were put in one group and those that had *initial 2* NPs or theme arguments were placed in a separate group. All verbs in Column A of the table below had *initial 1* NPs or agentive arguments and those in Column B had *initial 2* NPs or theme arguments. According to the semantic notions of agentive and non-agentive NPs, the verbs in Column A have been classified as unaccusative while those in Column B have been classified as unergative.

3. Table 1: Sample of Unaccusative and Unergative Verbs in Kalanga

| Column A | | | Column B | | |
|----------|---|-----------|----------|---|----------|
| yitika | — | happen | swika | — | arrive |
| gala | — | stay | nda | — | go |
| wa | — | fall | ha | — | come |
| fa | — | die | vima | — | hunt |
| thimula | — | sneeze | mila | — | stop |
| kula | — | grow | hinga | — | work |
| mela | — | germinate | tobela | — | follow |
| tswa | — | burn | tiha | — | run away |
| lala | — | sleep | bva | — | leave |
| bola | — | rot | bhuda | — | come out |
| tjila | — | live | gwa | — | fight |
| tetema | — | shake | zana | — | dance |
| bila | — | boil | bhukutja | — | swim |

| Column A | | | Column B | | |
|-----------|---|-----------|-----------|---|----------|
| woma | — | dry | lebeleka | — | talk |
| swaba | — | wilt | muka | — | get up |
| tanga | — | begin | simuka | — | stand up |
| nyikama | — | dissolve | deluka | — | drop off |
| nhuwa | — | stink | tembezela | — | pray |
| nyamalala | — | disappear | kohola | — | cough |
| | | | bukula | — | bark |
| | | | tjuluka | — | jump |
| | | | ngina | — | enter |

Although this is a mostly reliable way for making a distinction between unaccusative and unergative verbs, this study proposes three tests that can be used to confirm the two divisions. Three verbal extensions were used to test split intransitivity in Kalanga. These are the *-ik-* extension, the *-is-* extension and the *-il-* extension. The choice of these three extensions was not arbitrary. They were found to be the mostly used extensions in the corpus of data that was collected through interviews.

The *-ik-* Potential Verbal Extension

One possible way of attempting to make a clearer distinction between unaccusative and unergative verbs in Kalanga is finding which group of verbs takes the *-ik-* potential verbal extension. The *-ik-* extension in Kalanga expresses the possibility of an event taking place. The extension becomes *-ek-* when the root word contains the “o” or “e” for the sake of vowel harmony.

To illustrate that the *-ik-* verbal extension can be used to make a distinction between unaccusative and unergative verbs, acceptability or unacceptability of sentences using this extension is considered with each verb group. Different verbs were chosen at random from Table 1 above and Kalanga speaking informants were asked to construct sentences using these verbs. The sentences which were judged as being acceptable in this language were placed in one group and the unacceptable ones in another group. Interestingly, there is a contrast in the acceptability of *-ik-* that correlates with sentences in (4) versus those in (5) below.

4. (a) Ko- swik- ik- a ka Bulawayo yini?
 it arrive pot.ext. TV loc Bulawayo question
 (Is it possible to get to Bulawayo?)
- (b) Ko- nd- ik- a ipapa?’
 it go pot.ext TV there
 (Is it possible to go there?)

These examples are well-formed and acceptable sentences in Kalanga.

Therefore the *-ik-* extension is possible with this type of verb. The analysis of data showed the element *ko-* (it) appearing at the beginning of each verb containing the *-ik-* extension. For instance, in *Koswikika kaBulawayo yini?* (Is it possible to get to Bulawayo?), the speaker may be doubting the possibility of getting to Bulawayo under certain circumstances. It implies that there may be some constraints or problems that lead the speaker to ask this question. In a similar way, one might say, *Kanyi kwenyu koswikika yini?* (Is it possible to get at your home?). The answer to this question may simply be, *Koswikika*, meaning either it is safe or possible to get at this particular homestead.

The verbs that take the *-ik-* extension in this case are *initial 1* verbs as they take NPs that are subjects or agentive. Such verbs have been termed unergative on semantic grounds. So, it can be concluded that *-ik-* can be used with unergative verbs. On the other hand, it was also considered whether the *-ik-* could be used with the other type of intransitive verb, that is, the kind of verb which in RG terms is an *initial 2* verb. The result was the following unacceptable constructions:

5. (a) **Ko-* *f-* *ik-* *a* *ku-* *Goli*
 it *die* *pot ext* *TV* *in* *South Africa*
 (*It is possible to die in South Africa*).
 (b) **Ko-* *bol-* *ik-* *a* *nama* *yini*
 it *rot* *pot ext* *TV* *meat* *question marker*
 (*Is it possible for meat to rot?*)

The above sentences are ungrammatical and unacceptable despite the fact that they are structurally possible. It is semantically unacceptable to say, for instance, **Kofika kaTokwana yini?* (Is it possible to die at Tokwana?). Neither is it possible to say, **Nama inobolika* (Meat can rot). This means the potential extension *-ik-* cannot be used with this group of verbs in Kalanga. These verbs take NPs that are *initial 2* or theme arguments. Such verbs have been classified as unaccusative. Basing the argument on the constraint that the *-ik-* verbal extension has with this type of intransitive verb, it may be concluded that this is one of the ways of distinguishing unergative verbs from unaccusative verbs within the intransitive verb class in Kalanga.

It appears that the following generalisation about the use of the *-ik-* potential extension in Kalanga can be made; it is possible with some intransitive verbs but not with others. It seems the potential extension cannot be used with verbs expressing change of state but with those that have agentive NPs. It can be argued that the potential extension *-ik-* is possible with unergative verbs because they are higher on the transitivity scale than unaccusative verbs (Kangira, 2001). A possible explanation for this difference between the two verbs is that unaccusative verbs have

theme arguments while arguments for unergative verbs are agent-like. It can therefore be suggested that the potential extension *-ik-* be used as a test for split intransitivity in Kalanga. To a great extent this test helps in making the unaccusative-unergative distinction, although there may be some problems with some ambivalent verbs which can be classified both as unaccusative and unergative depending on how they are used.

The constraint on the use of the *-ik-* extension with unaccusative verbs is similar to the findings made by Chabata (1997:34) in the Shona language. He observes that,

if *-ik-* is suffixed to *-fa*: “die” and *-tsva* “burn” [in Shona], both of which are intransitive, the resultant forms, that is **-fika* “able to undergo dying”; “perishable”; “mortal” and **-tsvika* “able to be burnt; burnable”, would be unacceptable, despite the fact that the resulting forms could be logically possible.

Although Chabata does not talk of unaccusative and unergative verbs in Shona, his findings concerning the use of the *-ik-* extension can be used to justify the claims being made with unaccusative Kalanga verbs since the two languages are very closely related.

Another verbal extension, namely, the causative extension, was considered with the aim of trying to find out whether it can be used to make the distinction between unaccusative and unergative verbs in Kalanga. The findings seem to suggest that this verbal extension cannot be reliably used to account for split intransitivity. Details are provided in the next section.

The *-is-* causative extension

Causativisation implies making someone or something do something; for instance, to make someone cook, cultivate, run, work or go. There are three types of causatives that have been identified in the literature. These are morphological, analytic and lexical causatives (Comrie 1981). This study restricts itself to the morphological causative because it is the only type relevant to split intransitivity in Kalanga. From the Kalanga texts gathered, the morphological causative was found to be *-is-* in this language, just as in most Bantu languages. The causative morpheme becomes *-es-* when there is vowel “o” or “e” in the root word, because of vowel harmony. The morpheme *-is-* is suffixed to the root of the verb. This causative extension increases the valency of the verb. This means that if the original sentence had only one NP, it takes another NP in its causativised form and if it had two NPs it ends up with three NPs when it is causativised.

Before looking at the behaviour of intransitive verbs with respect to the notion of causativisation, I begin by showing what happens to transitive sentences when they are causativised. Although this paper’s focus is on intransitive verbs, transitive sentences are also examined for comparison’s

sake. The data below show that an additional NP is also added when a transitive sentence is causativized.

6. (a) i. NON CAUS
 Mme ba- ka bhik- a hadza
 mother AGR PST cook TV sadza
 (Mother cooked sadza).
 ii. CAUS
 Mme ba- ka bhik- is- a Lumbi hadza
 mother AGR PST cook CAUS TV Lumbi sadza
 (Mother made Lumbi cook sadza).
 (b) i. NON CAUS
 Nlume wa- ka kam- a mwizi
 man AGR PST milk TV sheep
 (The man milked the sheep).
 ii. CAUS
 Nlume wa- ka kam- is- a bayisana mwizi
 man AGR PST milk CAUS TV boys sheep
 (The man caused the boys to milk the sheep).

There are a number of important points to make here. The causative verbs of the transitive verb bases take two NPs after them. In other words, a new NP has to be added in the causative construction. This new NP comes either in the preverbal position as the subject of the causative construction or in the post verbal position as a causee object. In (6a), for instance, the NP *Lumbi* is introduced as the causee object following the verb, while the original object of the transitive non-causative verb *hadza* (*sadza*) comes after the causee. In the causative construction, the original object *hadza* (*sadza*) still maintains its status despite the fact that it does not immediately follow the verb. The causee cannot appear as the direct object because Kalanga allows only one direct object in a clause. In the two examples in (6) above, the new NP is introduced in the subject position of causative sentences and the original subject of the non-causative sentence is the first NP after the causative verb. Thus the original subject becomes the causee object, positioned immediately after the causative verb, and the original object or the basic object comes after the causee. For the reason stated earlier in this paragraph, the latter object is still the direct object of the causative construction.

If the order of the causee object and the direct object is changed, the result is an unacceptable structure in Kalanga. The following sentences are thus ungrammatical in Kalanga since the basic object precedes the causee object:

7. (a) **Nlume* *wa-* *ka* *kam-* *is-* *a* *mwizi* *bayisana*
 man *AGR* *PST* *milk* *CAUS* *TV* *sheep* *boys*
 (*The man made the boys milk the sheep*).
- b) **Nlimi* *wa-* *ka* *vun-* *is-* *a* *tjimanga* *bomme*
 farmer *AGR* *PST* *harvest* *CAUS* *TV* *maize* *women*
 (*The farmer caused the women to harvest the maize*).

Something more must be said about the transitive causative in terms of semantic propositions. In the acceptable causative sentences above, there appears to be two agents in each construction. Take a sentence like *Nlume waka kamisa bayisana mwizi* (The man caused the boys to milk the sheep), for example. The argument is that the causative verb *kamisa* (cause to milk) has two agents, *nlume* (man) whose patient is *bayisana* (boys), and *bayisana* (boys) whose patient is *mwizi* (sheep). The NP *bayisana* (boys) is both a patient and an agent in the same causative construction; it has dual roles. A general rule can be formulated when considering the arguments in the transitive causative. The causee, for example *bayisana* (boys), becomes an indirect object and the patient, for instance *mwizi* (sheep), the direct object. In other words, transitive causatives are double object causatives.

Moving on to the causativisation of the intransitive sentence, we see that there is an additional NP as already stated in the introductory remarks to this section. The extra NP can be identified in (8) below:

8. (a) i. NON CAUS
 Banhu *ba-* *ka* *hing-* *a*
 people *AGR* *PST* *work* *TV*
 (*People worked*).
- ii. CAUS
 Nlume *wa-* *ka* *hing-* *is-* *a* *banhu*
 man *AGR* *PST* *work* *CAUS* *TV* *people*
 (*The man caused the people to work*).
- (b) i. NON CAUS
 Mme *ba-* *no* *nd-* *a*
 mother *AGR* *PRES* *go* *TV*
 (*Mother is going*).
- ii. CAUS
 Mme *ba-* *no* *nd-* *is-* *a* *bana*
 mother *AGR* *PRES* *go* *CAUS* *TV* *children*
 (*Mother is causing the children to go*).

The verbs used in the above sentences are unergative. A pattern has emerged from the above sentences. The NON CAUS sentences, that is (i.) in each case, have only one NP. If the sentences are causativised, as in (ii.) in each case, an additional NP occurs, either in preverbal/subject position or

in the post verbal/object position. What has happened is that sentences that were originally intransitive have been transitivised by changing the verb form into a causative using the suffix *-is-*. This causative extension is a transitivity morpheme (Machobane, 1989). This is because it makes an intransitive verb transitive.

Since all the causativised sentences are acceptable in Kalanga, it can be said that the causative extension *-is-* can be used with unergative verbs. To a great extent, it also works with unaccusative verbs as shown in (9) below:

9. (a) i. NON CAUS
Mwana wa- ka f- a
 child AGR PST die TV
 (The child died).
- ii. CAUS
**Nloyi wa- ka f- is- a mwana*
 witch AGR PST die CAUS TV child
 (The witch caused the child to die).
- (b) i. NON CAUS
Mwana wa lal- a
 child AGR sleep TV
 (The child slept).
- ii. CAUS
Mme ba- ka lal- is- a mwana
 mother AGR PST sleep CAUS TV child
 (Mother made the child sleep).
- (c) i. NON CAUS
Nti wa- ka w- a
 tree AGR PST fall TV
 (The tree fell).
- ii. CAUS
Tate ba w- is- a nti
 father AGR/has fall CAUS TV tree
 (Father has caused the tree to fall).

The verbs used in the above sentences have been identified as unaccusative verbs earlier. It can be observed that except for the verb *fa* (die), which cannot be turned into a causative as **f-is-a* (cause to die), the other two verbs take the *-is-* extension. It is unacceptable to say **Mme baka fisa mwana* (Mother caused the child to die).

Besides the irregularity noted above, it can be observed in each case that when a sentence is turned into a causative construction, there is an additional NP. In other words the result is a transitivised sentence. It can therefore be said that, to a very large extent, the causatives of unergative and unaccusative verbs are similar; that is, both types of verbs take the *-is-* morphological

causative suffix. It can therefore be concluded that morphological causativisation cannot be used as a reliable test to show the distinction between unergative and unaccusative verbs as it produces similar results to a very large extent. This is unlike the *-ik-* potential extension which can be used with unergative verbs and not with unaccusative verbs.

This section has shown that in Kalanga, the morphological causative *-is-* is a transitiviser. This causative extension fails to serve as a test for split intransitivity as it can be used with all kinds of verbs — transitives, unaccusatives and unergatives. The next section examines how another transitivising verbal extension, the applicative morpheme *-il-* can be used to test split intransitivity.

The *-il-* applicative verbal extension

The applicative extension implies doing something for someone or something. The applicative verbal extension in Kalanga was found to be *-il-*. The applicative suffix becomes *-el-* because of vowel harmony when the root word contains the vowel “e” or “o”.

When the applicative extension is added to transitive verbs, an additional NP is introduced as shown in the following sentences:

10. (a) NON APPL

| | | | | | |
|-------------|------------|-----------|---------------|----------|---------------|
| <i>Tate</i> | <i>ba-</i> | <i>ka</i> | <i>bulay-</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>mbudzi</i> |
| Father | AGR | PST | kill | TV | goat |

(Father killed a goat).

APPL

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------|------------|-----------|---------------|------------|----------|-------------|---------------|
| <i>Tate</i> | <i>ba-</i> | <i>ka</i> | <i>bulay-</i> | <i>il-</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>bana</i> | <i>mbudzi</i> |
| father | AGR | PST | kill | APPL | TV | children | goat |

(Father killed a goat for children).

(b) NON APPL

| | | | | | |
|-------------------|------------|-----------|--------------|----------|----------------|
| <i>Lumbidzani</i> | <i>wa-</i> | <i>ka</i> | <i>kwal-</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>lukwalo</i> |
| Lumbidzani | AGR | PST | write | TV | letter |

(Lumbidzani wrote a letter).

APPL

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------|------------|-----------|--------------|------------|----------|------------|
| <i>Lumbidzani</i> | <i>wa-</i> | <i>ka</i> | <i>kwal-</i> | <i>il-</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>mme</i> |
| Lumbidzani | AGR | PST | write | APPL | TV | mother |

lukwalo
letter

(Lumbidzani wrote a letter for mother).

It can be noted that, just as in the causative constructions in (8 and 9) above, the introduction of a new NP changes the bivalent verbs *bulaya* (kill) and *kwalala* (write) to trivalent verbs. Another thing to note here is the order of the NPs after the applicative verb. The applicative object, that is, the

beneficiary object, should always come immediately after the verb (Alsina and Mchombo, 1988). This explains why the following sentences are ungrammatical:

11. (a) **Tate baka bulayila mbudzi bana*
 (Father killed a goat for children).
 (b) **Lumbidzani waka kwalila lukwalo mme.*
 (Lumbidzani wrote a letter for mother).

Although such constructions as in (11) above are considered ungrammatical in Kalanga, what the researcher observed was that they may be used in speech and the meaning conveyed without any problem. It was also observed that the deviation from the grammatically accepted sentences may occur unconsciously when people engage in conversation. A probable reason may be that the speaker's focus or emphasis may influence the choice of the object to follow the applicative or causative verb, or it may just be a natural slip of the tongue. For instance, in (11a), the speaker's focus may be on the kind of animal that father killed for the children, that is *mbudzi* (goat) and not *ngombe* (cow). In an attempt to bring out the prominence of the object, the speaker ends up moving it forward into the position of the benefactor in the case of the applicative and in the position of the causee in the case of causativisation. If the speaker notices that she has confused the positions of the two NPs after the verb, she is quick to correct herself. Shona conversational discourse also tends to have constructions with the order of NPs in (11), but the original or intended meaning is not distorted.

The verbs that are used in sentences (12a and b) are unaccusative and those in (12c and d) are unergative. In the unaccusative examples, it can be noted that the applicative cannot be used as indicated by the unacceptable sentences in each case.

12. (a) NON APPL

| | | | | |
|--------------|------------|-----------|-------------|----------|
| <i>Mwana</i> | <i>wa-</i> | <i>ka</i> | <i>kul-</i> | <i>a</i> |
| <i>child</i> | AGR | PST | grow | TV |

(The child grew).

APPL

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|------------|-----------|-------------|------------|----------|------------|
| * <i>Mwana</i> | <i>wa-</i> | <i>ka</i> | <i>kul-</i> | <i>il-</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>mme</i> |
| <i>child</i> | AGR | PST | grow | APPL | TV | mother |

(The child grew for mother).

- (b) NON APPL

| | | | | |
|-----------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|----------|
| <i>Zwimbalo</i> | <i>zwa-</i> | <i>ka</i> | <i>tsw-</i> | <i>a</i> |
| <i>clothes</i> | AGR | PST | burn | TV |

(The clothes burned).

- APPL
 *Zwimbalo zwa- ka tsw- il- a tate
 clothes AGR PST burn APPL TV father
 (Clothes burned for father).
- (c) NON APPL
 Mme ba- ka hing- a
 mother AGR PST work TV
 (Mother worke).
 APPL
 Mme ba- ka hing- il- a bana babo
 mother AGR PST work APPL TV children her
 (Mother worked for her children).
- (d) NON APPL
 Tate ba- ka zan- a
 father AGR PST dance TV
 (Father danced).
 APPL
 Tate ba- ka zan- il- a bana
 father AGR PST dance APPL TV children
 (Father danced for the children).

If the applicative extension is used with unaccusative verbs, the sentences are ungrammatical. The ungrammaticality of these unaccusative sentences can be explained by the fact that these sentences have a Theme argument, so they cannot take a Beneficiary after the verb. This is because the Theme is lower than the Beneficiary on the Thematic Hierarchy.⁴ So, a lower thematic role cannot access the subject position when a higher role is relegated to the object position as what happens in the applicative constructions in the above sentences. This is a violation of the Thematic Hierarchy Condition (THC) which states that:

The external argument in an applicative construction must be higher on the thematic hierarchy than the argument introduced by the applicative suffix (Alsina and Mchombo 1988).

Therefore the Theme cannot access the subject position instead of the Beneficiary since the latter is higher on the Thematic Hierarchy than the former. This explains why the applicative extension cannot be used with unaccusative verbs. However, the applicative extension can be used with unergative verbs as shown in the applicative constructions in (12c and d) above, which my informants judged correct. Both sentences have an external

4. The commonly used Thematic Hierarchy in linguistic theory is the one that was popularised by Jackendoff (1972) (See Dowty 1991). It is as follows: Agent>Beneficiary/Maleficiary>Goal/Source/Experiencer>Instrument>Theme/Patient>Location.

argument of an Agent which is higher on the Thematic Hierarchy than the Beneficiary which is the applicative object. There is no violation of the THC in these two sentences. So, it can be concluded that the applicative extension works with unergative verbs and not with unaccusative verbs when the applicative object is a Beneficiary. This restriction of the use of the Beneficiary NP to unergative verbs can be used as a procedure of identifying unaccusative verbs and unergative verbs.

But, revisiting unaccusative verbs from a different angle shows that there is a condition in which they can be used with the *-il-* extension. This time the applicative object is not a Beneficiary but a Locative as shown in the data below:

13. (a) Zwimbalo zwa- ka tsw- il- a mu- ngumba
 clothes AGR PST burn APPL TV LOC house
 (The clothes got burnt in the house).
- (b) Mwana wa- ka kul- il- a ka- Makulela
 child AGR PST grow APPL TV LOC Makulela
 (The child grew up at Makulela).

In these sentences, the external argument is the Theme and the applicative NP is a Locative. They are acceptable because the thematic role Locative is lower on the Thematic Hierarchy than the role Theme. It is within the requirements of the THC that the external argument of a construction must be higher on the Thematic Hierarchy than the applicative NP. These sentences do not therefore violate the THC. Just like the causative morpheme *-is-*, the applicative extension *-il-* is a transitivity morpheme as it results in an additional NP in an applicative construction.

Conclusion

It has been demonstrated in this paper that split intransitivity is a linguistic aspect of Kalanga. It has been shown that the notions of *initial 1* and *initial 2* and the argument structure of verbs can be used to explain the distinction between unaccusative and unergative verbs in general. It has also been shown that to a very large extent, both unaccusative and unergative verbs can take the causative morpheme *-is-* without affecting the acceptability of sentences in Kalanga. Two tests for split intransitivity have been identified as the *-ik-* and *-il-* verbal extensions in Kalanga. Unaccusative verbs cannot take an applicative *-il-* extension while unergative verbs can. Similarly, unaccusative verbs cannot be used with the *-ik-* extension, but unergative verbs can. Unaccusative verbs cannot take an applicative NP that is a Beneficiary because of the THC which restricts the Theme argument to precede the Beneficiary. On the other hand, unergative verbs can take the applicative NP which is a Beneficiary.

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