

Syntax

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Questionnaire Grammatical Relations

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January 9, 2020

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3. Language

Kambera

4. Grammatical relations in the domain of nominal NP heads

In Kambera, nominal heads of NPs do not bear any form of case marking. This fact is illustrated by the 3 glosses below. In gloss 1, the intransitive sentence features the S ‘driver’ without any case marking. This fact also holds true for the A ‘father’ in the transitive sentence in gloss 2. Lastly, also the P ‘horse’ in the transitive sentence in gloss 3 features no case marking of any kind.

- (1) Na- ’mài na ’sopir
3sg.N- come ART driver
‘The driver comes’

[Klamer and Klamer, 1998, p. 48]

- (2) I Ama na- kei -nja rí
ART father 3SG.N- buy -3PL.D vegetable
‘Father buys them vegetables’

[Klamer and Klamer, 1998, p. 63]

- (3) Nda ku- màka -a pa- kaliti hidu
NEG 1SG.N- be.able -MOD CTR- ride horse
‘I cannot ride a horse’

[Klamer and Klamer, 1998, p. 74]

Based on these examples from the descriptive grammar, I would argue that the grammatical relation of case marking in Kambera’s nominal NP head domain warrants a neutral characterisation.

5. Grammatical relations in the domain of pronominal NP heads

When it comes to the three domains for which grammatical relations are discussed in this exercise, the domain of pronominal NP heads features the most extensive system in Kambera. First of all, pronouns exist in the form of separate pronoun morphemes [Klamer and Klamer, 1998, p. 70] and pronoun clitics (also) [Klamer and Klamer, 1998, p. 62]. Whereas pronoun clitics are the verbal arguments for person, number and case—referencing any optional nominal NP head which would in a language like English be the verbal argument—pronouns are merely used to invoke emphasis or to resolve ambiguity in sentences.

Pronouns behave similarly to nominal NP heads as mentioned in the former question when it comes to case marking.

As described by the author [Klamer and Klamer, 1998, p. 72], in Kambera, the S and A behave similarly in the

- (4) a. Mbàda manahu -da -ka uhu
already cook -3PL.G -PRF rice
'They have already cooked (some) rice'
- b. Mbàda manahu -da -nya -ka na uhu
already cook -3PL.G -3SG.D -PRF ART rice
'They have already cooked (some) rice'

[Klamer and Klamer, 1998, p. 68]

6. Grammatical relations in the domain of verb agreement

The grammar of Kambera shows that, while verbs do feature the aforementioned pronoun clitics, verbs themselves do not show any agreement with their arguments as. This is supported by the fact that the clitics, which are affixed to the verb, are themselves the arguments of the verbal head, and should thus be seen as separate from the VP head. Verbs not carrying any form of person or number marker in both transitive and intransitive contexts is illustrated by glosses 1 and 5. In gloss 1, the verb 'mài' is without any marking of person and number, and so is the verb 'wua' in gloss 5.

- (5) Na- wua -nja
3sg.N- give -3SG.D
'He gives it'

[Klamer and Klamer, 1998, p. 81]

As the agreement of verbs is the same for S, A and P like arguments, I would describe these grammatical relations as being neutral.

References

[Klamer and Klamer, 1998] Klamer, M. A. F. and Klamer, M. (1998). *A grammar of Kambera*, volume 18. Walter de Gruyter.