

Pronominal object markers in Bantu and Romance*

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Romance pronominal clitics and Bantu object markers vary in gender and number, replace arguments, and surface to the left of the verbal root in declarative clauses. Both types of morphemes are regularly analyzed as affixes on the verb. It is argued that both have syntactic properties that justify treating them differently from lexical affixes. The argument is first made for French unstressed pronominal objects like *me*, *le*, *en*, drawing from their distribution in contemporary French as well as from their historical behavior. It is shown that they are syntactic objects, and that their morphophonological affix-like properties should be treated independently of their syntactic behavior. Then evidence is presented pointing to the fact that Bantu object markers are also syntactic objects of some sort. The last section asks whether one can arrive at a unified treatment of both elements. The conclusion is that by focusing on the morphophonological properties of these pronominal elements, one runs the risk of overlooking their syntactic properties.

1. The Bantu-Romance connexion

Romance and Bantu languages mark objects on the verb, and in both language families the object markers share remarkable properties: they replace arguments; they vary in gender and number; and they surface, in declarative clauses, on the left of the verb while the normal object position is to the right. In the present paper we will use the term “object marker” as a theoretically neutral term for these elements. In Romance in general, and in French in particular, object markers are traditionally treated as clitic pronouns (Grevisse 1993; Kayne 1975; Zwicky 1977), but the affixal approach has deep roots in the literature (Tesnière 1959/1969: 85; Blanche-Benvéniste 1975: 41; Blanche-Benvéniste et al. 1984: 70; Auger 1995; Borer 1986;

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Roberge & Vinet 1989; Roberge 1990; Miller 1992; Miller & Sag 1997; for a recent review, see Miller & Monachesi 2003). In Bantu languages, object markers are traditionally considered affixes (Johnston 1919/1922; Baker 1988), but some authors treat them as clitics (Duranti 1979; Hyman & Duranti 1982; Mchombo 2001, 2002) or speak of *cliticization* (Kimenyi 1980: 179) often on the basis of their apparent similarity with Romance object markers: they are pronominal in nature (Bresnan & Mchombo 1987) and they surface to the left of the verb root in a rigid order. On what criteria can we base ourselves to decide between the two types of analyses, and is a common analysis of Bantu and Romance object markers possible?

In order to discuss the difference between clitics and affixes, we need to have working definitions of these concepts. The traditional definitions are that affixes are pieces of morphology serving as building blocks for word construction in the lexicon while clitics are syntactic objects with postlexical morphophonological attachment to a host. However, nowadays, the theoretical distinction between clitics and affixes is extremely difficult to draw. Not only is it possible in some models to generate bound flexional morphology under syntactic heads distinct from their base (e.g., Chomsky 1981; Pollock 1989), but also, some authors propose that clitics are phrasal affixes (Anderson 2005; Miller 1992). The purpose of this paper is not to argue for or against any of these models but to show that both Romance and Bantu object markers have properties that place them within the syntactic domain in some respects. Hence, if we consider that there is a continuum from independent word to clitic to affix, in both language families object markers are somewhat towards the clitic side, but perhaps more so for Romance than for Bantu.

The distinction between clitic and affix, if we use the traditional definitions, is relatively clear in principle; but when it comes to object markers which attach to a verb, and which do not occupy the usual position of free pronouns, this distinction is difficult to apply without considering the facts in more detail. It is not *a priori* obvious that object markers are independent syntactically and semantically from the verbs on which they appear, because they often spell out the arguments of these verbs. Bantu object markers have affixal properties: they intervene between tense and modality prefixes and the verbal root, and in languages which allow more than one object marker, these appear in a fixed order (but see section 4). Similarly, Romance object markers have morphophonological properties that are affix-like. In contemporary French for example, their host is always a verb; they appear in a fixed order; there are constraints on cooccurrence, for example the sequence **me lui* is excluded; it is impossible to find sequences of two identical object markers having a different function, as illustrated in (1b) with *en*; they are subject to arbitrary gaps, for example the sequence *le lui* is usually replaced in colloquial French by *lui*; they are subject to the morphophonological rule of elision in front of a vowel (Miller 1992: 173 ss.).

- (1) a. Je crois l'auteur de ce livre₁ capable de ce méfait₂.
 I believe the author of this book capable of that misdeed
- b. *J'en₁ en₂ crois l'auteur capable.

Given that an affixal approach seems to account for both language families, what is the motivation for a clitic approach to Romance and Bantu object markers? The answer I want to propose is that to treat these elements as clitics is to claim that they have properties that place them within the set of (morpho)syntactic elements.

In what follows, I will concentrate on French, the language I know best, and on Chicheŵa, as representing their respective language families, while recognizing that, given the variety of phenomena within both language families, what is said of one of these languages does not necessarily hold for all of them. In the case of French, I argue that the syntactic computational system is involved in either the positioning of object markers or in constraining the relation between them and their thematic position. This to me justifies treating them as clitics, that is, as syntactic elements, even though these elements are phonologically dependent. In the **case** of Bantu object markers, there is, to my knowledge, no evidence of the same type as in that offered for French, but Mchombo (1993, 2002) offers interesting evidence that they are syntactic elements. I review the arguments in section 3. Accepting this evidence, I ask in section 4 whether a unified account is possible for both languages.

2. Object markers in French

Given the ambiguous nature of French object markers, theories differ in the way they are treated. The Chomskyan framework has tended to place more emphasis on their morphosyntactic properties, and to favor the clitic analysis (in particular Sportiche 1995, 1998). Work in HPSG (starting with Miller 1992) gives more weight to the morphophonological properties of these elements and tends to favor the affixal approach. I argue here that, whatever the precise account one may want to adopt, French object markers are visible to the syntactic component. I agree with Gerlach (2002) that clitics are neither “words” nor “affixes”, but a special category which requires a special treatment. My personal position is that it is productive to approach them with a combination of Sportiche’s (1995, 1998) general type of approach and Distributed Morphology (Bonet 1991; Halle & Marantz 1993, 1994): they are generated as independent bundles of features within the functional layer of the clause, and they, or an element in their specifier, may bind a thematic role within the clause; the bundles of features are then spelled-out in a postsyntactic component. Be that as it may, my aim here is not to argue in favor of a precise analysis, but to emphasise the syntactic properties of those elements that make them special.

A simple analysis of French object markers is to treat them as affixes reducing the valency of the verb on which they appear (Borer 1986; Suñer 1988; Roberge & Vinet 1989; Roberge 1990). For example, from the trivalent verb *dire* “to say” selecting an Agent, a Theme, and a Goal, one may derive in the lexicon the bivalent verb *le-dire* “it-say” selecting only an Agent and a Goal, and with an object marker binding the Theme argument of the root. If object markers are operators on the argument structure of the verb to which they attach, they can be considered derivational affixes of a sort. An apparent problem with this approach is that the position of Romance object markers is not always to the left of the verb. Miller & Sag (1997) propose to encode the information in the morphology, a move that is feasible for contemporary French, because object markers are preverbal everywhere (*il le-dit* “he says it”) except in positive imperatives (*dis-le* “say it”). Thus, Miller & Sag’s analysis stipulates that the lexicon generates the object marker as a suffix with verbs having positive imperative morphology, and as a prefix with all other verb forms.

Well known facts go against such a simple approach to French object markers. Firstly, unselected complements may surface as object markers on the verb, as shown in (2). Because adjuncts are not lexically selected by a predicate, the fact that they may be realized as object markers on the verb is not accounted for, without additional assumptions, by the idea that object markers absorb the verb’s arguments in the lexicon.

- (2) a. Il y mange souvent.
 he LOC eats often¹
 He eats there often.
- b. Jean leur construit une maison.
 Jean 3DAT.PL. builds a house
 He is building a house for them

Secondly, and more importantly, French object markers have the *displacement* property: they often surface in a position distant from the one where they are interpreted. (*Displacement* should be interpreted here as implying the necessity of establishing a syntactic link between the position of the object marker and either

1. Abbreviations used in this paper. For the Romance examples: number = person of the object marker; ACC = accusative; DAT = dative; SG = singular; PL = plural; LOC = locative; GEN = genitive; NEG = negative particle; REFL = reflexive; for the Bantu examples, we have retained the glosses of the originals, but harmonized the presentation of class information: number = word class; SM = subject marker; OM = object marker; REFL = reflexive; T/A = tense/aspect; TNS = tense; PRES = present; PST = PAST; HAB = habitual; dir M = directional modality; CAUS = causative; APPL = applicative; RECIP = reciprocal; FV = final vowel; INDIC or I = indicative; DO = direct object; IO = indirect object. Other abbreviations are spelled out in the text.

a thematic position or the head selecting the object in question.) From a parsing point of view, (3) requires the parser to store the marker *lui* in memory and wait until it reaches the verb *parlé* to be able to interpret it.

- (3) Jean *lui* a souvent longuement parlé ____.
 Jean 3_{DAT.SG} has often long talked
Jean often talked to him for a long time

Displacement is particularly clear when the object marker is not an argument of the lexical verb, but of a complement (of a complement) of that head. Consider the following examples, where the verbs are underlined and the thematic position of the object is between angled brackets. In example (4), the object marker is thematically the complement of a verb embedded under a causative, but it appears on the auxiliary of the causative, three verbs higher in the clause; in (5), the object marker is the argument of the adjective complement of the verb; and in (6), it is a noun complement, the noun itself being the argument of the complement of a causative verb.

- (4) Les citoyens *les* ont tous très souvent laissé bêtement démolir <les>.
 The citizens 3_{ACC.PL} have all very often let stupidly demolish
The citizens have all very often let them stupidly demolish.
- (5) Luc *le* considère [*le*] intelligent.]
 Luc 3_{ACC.SG} considers intelligent
Luc considers him intelligent.
- (6) Lui qui aimait tellement cet air, il *en* aura au moins entendu jouer
 he who liked so-much this air, he 3_{GEN} will-have at least heard play
 [les premières notes <en>] avant de s'éteindre.
 the first notes before of REFL-dying
He, who liked this air so much, he will have at least heard (someone) play the first notes of it before dying.

On the basis of such facts, Labelle (1985) argues that object markers do not lexically, or pre-syntactically, operate on the verb on which they appear, and that therefore they must be syntactic elements. However, Miller (Miller 1992; Miller & Sag 1997; Miller & Monachesi 2003; also Monachesi 1999, 2005 for other languages), working within the HPSG framework, shows that an affixal approach can account for the facts if the verb affixed in the lexicon with an object marker adopts the argument structure of all the predicates that compose with it, up to and including the one selecting the argument spelled-out by the object marker. Hence, the pronominal affix affects the valency of the verb on which it appears, because this verb's argument structure is extended to include the argument corresponding to the object. This approach accounts for the cliticization of adjuncts by assuming

that they are additions to the argument structure of a predicate. Notice that, while treating French object markers as lexical affixes, this account requires the construction of a sequence of dependency relations between the host verb and the predicate selecting the object, a process not purely lexicon internal, but dependent on syntactic combinatory operations. Hence the account has a syntactic component to it; it does not treat object markers as syntactic objects, but it builds a complex syntactic object out of the various predicates involved.

A third argument for treating French pronominal object markers as syntactic objects is that they are subject to constraints on syntactic A-bar movement (Godard 1992; Haverkort 1994; Sportiche 1995, 1998; Tellier 1991: 90). For example, an object marker cannot be extracted from a tensed clause (7), and it cannot be extracted if the embedded infinitive has a specified subject (8).

- (7) *Jean *les* veut [_C que je voie ⟨les⟩].
 Jean 3_{ACC.SG} wants that I see ⟨3_{ACC.SG}⟩
Jean wants me to see them.
- (8) a. *Jean *lui* a laissé [Pierre parler ⟨lui⟩].
 Jean 3_{DAT.SG} has let [Pierre speak ⟨3_{DAT.SG}⟩]
Jean let Pierre speak to him. (Sportiche 1998: 254, ex. 14c also 1995, ex. 13c)
- b. *Cela *leur* fera [téléphoner Jean ⟨leur⟩].
 This 3_{DAT.PL} will-make [telephone Jean ⟨3_{DAT.PL}⟩]
This will make Jean telephone them. (Kayne 1975: 231)

Moreover, extraction of the genitive marker *en*, replacing complements in *de X* (“of X” or “from X”), occurs in the same contexts as extraction of the WH *de quoi* (“of what”). While extraction from a definite or indefinite DP is possible (examples 6, and 9), it is excluded if the DP is introduced by a possessive determiner (a “specified subject”) (10); similarly it is impossible to extract the noun complement if it is locative rather than genitive (11) (Sportiche 1995).

- (9) Extraction from a DP possible in contexts where WH can be extracted:
- a. Paul *en* a vu [une photo ⟨en⟩]. (= de la gare)
 Paul of-it has seen a picture ⟨of-it⟩ (= of the station)
Paul has seen a picture of it.
- b. *De quoi* Paul a-t-il vu [une photo ⟨de quoi⟩]?
 of what Paul has he seen a picture ⟨of what⟩?
Of what did Paul see a picture?
- (10) ...except when the DP has a possessive determiner (subject):
- a. *Paul *en* a vu [ma photo ⟨en⟩].
 Paul of-it has seen my picture ⟨of-it⟩
Paul has seen my picture of it.

- b. ***De quoi** Paul a-t-il vu [ma photo <de quoi>]?
 of what Paul has he seen my picture <of what>
Paul saw my picture of what?

(11) ...and when the complement has a locative value:

- a. ***Jean en** a déchiré [une dépêche <en>]. (= de Paris)
 Jean from-there has torn a dispatch <from-there> (= from Paris)
Jean tore a dispatch from there.
- b. ***D'où** Jean a-t-il déchiré [une dépêche <d'où>]?
 from where Jean has he torn a dispatch <from where>
Jean tore a dispatch from where?

compare with:

- c. **Jean en** a déchiré [la première page <en>] (= du livre)
 Jean of-it has torn the first page <of-it> (= of the book)
Jean tore the first page of it.
- d. **De quoi** Jean a-t-il déchiré [la première page <de quoi>]?
 of what Jean has he torn the first page <of what>
Jean tore the first page of what?

To my mind, examples (10) and (11) are crucial, as they demonstrate that the relation between the object marker and its thematic position is of the same type as that governing syntactic movement. It is not clear how the affixal approach briefly outlined above can account in a principled way for the parallel between object markers and WH constituents: why can a verb absorb the argument structure of its noun complement only if this noun has a genitive, rather than a locative, complement, and only if the noun is not introduced by a possessive determiner? Sportiche (1998) and Valois (1991) account for the pattern illustrated in (9)–(11) by appealing to the notion of antecedent government: the thematic position associated with what is for them a clitic must be antecedent governed, i.e., properly bound. In Sportiche (1995, 1998), the binder is not the clitic itself, but an empty pronominal in the specifier of a Clitic Phrase. In either **case**, the crucial point is that there is a syntactic relation between the clitic or its specifier and the corresponding thematic position.² I conclude that French object markers have syntactic properties that must be accounted for, and that cannot be ignored by proponents of an affixal approach.

I now turn to evidence from the history of French object markers which shows quite clearly that the morphophonological properties of these elements should not be taken as an indication of their status over other considerations relating to the syntactic

2. This, of course, when the clitic is thematic.

behavior of these elements. The data to be presented here was published in joint work with Paul Hirschbühler over some years (Hirschbühler & Labelle 1994, 2000, 2003, 2004; Labelle & Hirschbühler 2001a,b, 2005; Labelle 2007). Before starting, it is important to establish that in Old French, i.e., from the 9th century to the 13th century, unstressed object pronouns (the ancestors of contemporary object markers, or pronominal clitics) passed nearly all the tests used to argue for the affixal character of pronominal object markers in contemporary French. These properties of Old French weak object pronouns, discussed in de Kok (1985) and Foulet (1968 [1928]) are summarized here; they clearly show that Old French weak object pronouns shared the main properties of contemporary French object markers on the verb.

- Selection of the host: in the Old French texts, weak pronouns always appeared next to the verb whatever the position of the verb in the clause;
- Constraints on cooccurrence: just as in contemporary French, the sequence *me lui* (or rather **lui me*, since the normal order in Old French was *le me*) was excluded;
- Rigid order within a clitic group (even though the ordering changed during Middle French – between the 13th and the 16th centuries – Galambos 1985);
- Haplogy: one did not find sequences of two identical pronouns having a different function;
- Arbitrary gaps: the sequence *le li* (nowadays *le lui*, i.e., 3ACC-3DAT) was replaced by *li (lui)*, a gap which survives in many dialects, but not in standard written French;
- Weak object pronouns could not be coordinated;
- Weak object pronouns were subject to morphophonological rules, such as elision in front of a vowel: *je l'aime* 'I him love'; in the oldest texts, they also elided in post-verbal position in front of a vowel initial DP (*Donne m'un feu* 'give me a fief'), which suggests that this rule was initially linked to lack of stress.

If we limit ourselves to these morphophonological properties (with the exception perhaps of the last one), we would apparently have to conclude that Old French weak object pronouns were not clitic elements but affixal object markers on the verb. However, a number of empirical facts regarding the grammar and history of Old and Middle French weak object pronouns lead us to reject this position.

Firstly, for Old French, the position of weak object pronouns with respect to the verb depended on the syntactic context, and the changes in their position with respect to the verb are best explained by changes in clausal syntax. Consider the placement of weak pronouns in tensed main clauses. Old French was a verb second or V2 language in main clauses, a fact that may be accounted for by the presence of a tense feature [+T] on the Fin node (the first node of the CP layer), triggering movement of the verb to this node, and by the necessity to fill a discourse-related position (Topic or Focus)

to the left of the verb. In V2 clauses, pronominal objects always occurred to the left of the finite verb. This word order follows if the pronoun had a [+T] feature which adjoined them to the element bearing this feature, i.e., Fin in main clauses and the inflectional head T elsewhere. This analysis is schematized in (12).

- (12) V2 : [_{TopP} XP [_{FinP} **le fait** [_{TP} ... ⟨fait⟩... [_{vP}... ⟨fait⟩...]]]]
- +Top
+T
- CP layer
TP

- (13) Toutes ces choses **te** presta Nostre Sires
 all these things 2_{DAT.SG} lent Our Lord
Our Lord lent you all those things. (Queste: 68, 28 in de Kok: 74)

Apart from V2 main clauses, Old French had a number of verb initial, or V1 main clauses. In the oldest texts, weak object pronouns were postverbal in V1 main clauses. This alternation between preverbal vs postverbal position was clearly dependent on verb position, i.e., on the syntax of the clause. The postverbal position follows if in V1 main clauses the verb raised over the pronoun to the first position of the CP layer, where it satisfied the language's requirement for a discourse-related element. This is schematized in (14).

- (14) Stage 1: weak object pronoun post-verbal in CP initial position; preverbal elsewhere: V → Top

- (et) [_{TopP} **Fait** [_{FinP} **le** ⟨fait⟩ [_{TP} ...]]]]
- CP layer
TP

- (15) Fuit **li** li sans et la colour.
 Leave 3_{DAT.SG} the blood and the color
She loses her blood and color.
 (Piramus & Tisbé. ed. C. de Boer. Paris: Champion 1921: 664–6)

Around 1170, weak object pronouns started to appear preverbally in coordinated V1 main clauses, while remaining postverbal in non coordinated ones, as schematized in (16a–b). We assume that independent main clauses had the structure in (14) and (16a), while main clauses introduced by a coordinator were now generated without a discourse-related higher head where the verb could raise, as illustrated in (16b), a precursor perhaps of the breakdown of the V2 grammar.

- (16) Stage 2 (c. 1170): weak object pronoun preverbal after coordinator:

- a. [_{TopP} **fait** [_{FinP} **le** ... [...]]] but b. [_{coord} **et** [_{FinP} **le fait** [_{TP} ...]]]]
- CP
CP
TP

- (17) Tele vie mena com ot fait Acháb et li suen [et se forfist
such life led as have done Achab and the his and REFLCOMMIT-a-mis deed
vers notre Seigneur]
against our Lord

He led a life like that led by Achab and his people, and sinned against our Lord.

(QLR: 190, 27, in de Kok: 92)

Throughout that period, the preverbal vs postverbal alternation in weak object pronoun position held for all illocutionary types of clauses: declaratives, imperatives, questions. It is clear that the alternation was dependent on the syntactic context, and not on verb morphology. For independent reasons, weak object pronouns became preverbal in absolute CP initial position in declaratives and questions during the 13th century; after that, the possibility for an alternation remained only in imperatives. In imperatives, however, the alternation between preverbal and postverbal position according to the syntax of the clause survived until the 18th century: *Dis-le* (“say it”), but ... *et le dis* (“and say it”).

If the structures outlined above are correct, the change in the position of the weak object pronoun with respect to the verb results from a change in the position of the verb with respect to that occupied by weak pronouns in main clauses, i.e., whether the verb raised above the pronoun to a discourse-related head or not. The syntactic position of weak pronouns was not affected by the change. This analysis entails that weak object pronouns were syntactically independent from the verb, as they remained in place when the verb moved. Because they were also phonologically dependent elements, we are led to conclude that Old French weak object pronouns were already clitic elements.

Secondly, until the 17th century, weak object pronouns could have scope over coordinated VPs, a fact indicating that they were not lexical affixes.

- (18) Et Gauchier Le Fevre de Orgelet le [reçut ⟨le⟩ et norri ⟨le⟩ et
and Gauchier Le Fevre de Orgelet him [received ⟨him⟩ and fed ⟨him⟩ and
aleva ⟨le⟩ en sa meson par douze ans].
raised ⟨him⟩ in his house for twelve years]

(Mir. Louis 50: 8, in de Kok: 2) (1283)

Thirdly, until the end of Middle French (16th century), one finds clitic climbing out of infinitives. Crucially, weak object pronouns could even climb out of infinitives introduced by a preposition (19a) or by a WH element (19b) (Martineau, 1990, 1991).³

3. Similar examples are found in Old French texts; the following one is from Aucassin & Nicolette (end 12th c.):

- (1) se je le seusc u trover ⟨le⟩, /Je ne P eusse ore mie a querre ⟨l'⟩. (XL)
if I 3s knew where find /I NEG 3s had hence not to look-for
If I knew where to find her, I would not have to look for her any more.

- (19) a. *il la commence* [_{CP} a sonner ⟨la⟩]
 he it starts to ring ⟨it⟩
He starts to ring it. (CNNA [1468] : 452/103; in Martineau 1990)
- b. *On ne le sçavoit* [_{CP} à qui demander ⟨le⟩]
 One NEG it knew to whom (to) ask ⟨it⟩
One didn't know to whom to ask for it.
 (CNNV [1505–15]: 84/27; in Martineau 1990)

In these examples, the pronoun raises out of a CP, something not expected if it is a lexical affix on the verb at that time. In contemporary French, clitic climbing survives only with causative and perception verbs.

Consider now the phenomenon of interpolation: that is, the possibility of a clitic being separated from the infinitival verb. In the oldest stage of French, weak object pronouns associated with an infinitival verb usually climbed out of the infinitive to appear on the main verb, as illustrated above; in the rare cases where pronouns appeared in the infinitival clause, they were full pronouns or they occurred in immediate post-verbal position (de Kok 1985: 243 ss.). It is only during the 14th century that one starts finding preverbal weak object pronouns on the infinitival verb (de Kok 1985: 326 ss.). The first governed negated infinitive with *ne* and a *pas/point*-type support negative to be reported in the literature dates from 1372 (de Kok 1985: 335), and it can be seen that both the pronoun and the verb precede the negative VP adverbial *point*.

- (20) *Pour ce, (...) est il bon de ne se haster point*
 For that, (...) is it good of NEG REFL hasten not
For that, (...) is it good not to hasten.
 (La Tour Landry [1372]: 102; in de Kok 1985: 335)

However, in the same text and in texts of the same period, one sees elements intervening between the pronoun and the verb in non-negative clauses.

- (21) *l'on ne se puet trop humilier envers Dieu, ne le trop*
 one NEG REFL can too-much humiliate towards God, nor 3ACC.SG too-much
servir
 serve.
One cannot humiliate oneself too much towards God, nor serve him too much.
 (La Tour Landry [1372]: 153, in de Kok 1985: 339)

The intervening element could be an XP or a strong adverb:

- (22) a. *et son père, pour la de son duel gecter, ly parla*
 and his father, for 3ACC.SG of her grief throw, 3DAT.SG spoke
and his father spoke to her to distract her from her grief
 (Saintré [1385–1460]: 5,1; in Pearce 1990: 223)

- b. (...) se prindrent toutes a le tresgrandement loer
 (...) REFL took all to 3ACC.SG very-much praise
(they) all started to praise him exceedingly
 (Saintré [1385–1460]: 129,11, *ibidem*)
- c. et marchoit vers sa femme pour la tresbien frotter
 and walked towards his wife fo 3ACC.SG very-well rub
and (he) went to his wife to rub her well
 (CNNA [1468]: 241; in de Kok: 339)

From the examples given in de Kok, interpolation by a non-negative adverb seemed to have been possible without interruption from the end of the 14th century. For negative adverbs, de Kok (1985: 335) gives the following evolution: the word order in (20) was the norm until the beginning of the 17th century, when it was replaced by the order *pronoun-negative adverb-verb*.

- (23) pour ne se point souiller ny l'esprit ny le corps.
 for NEG REFL not taint neither the spirit nor the body
In order not to taint one's spirit or body. (Colletet: 109, 47, in de Kok p. 336)

The position of weak object pronouns throughout this period appears to be the T node of the infinitival, to the left of adverbs and next to the negative marker *ne* in negative clauses. Here again, the change may be explained by a change in verbal behavior: the infinitival verb, but not the pronouns, stopped raising to T, with a time-lag between positive and negative clauses perhaps because the negative marker *ne* attracted the verb (on the evolution of verb position in negative clauses, see Hirschbühler & Labelle 1994).

- (24) [_{TP} CL-V [(XP)_{[VP ...]]] → [_{TP} CL [(XP/ADV)_[VP V ...]]]}

Of course, even though the pronouns were separated from the verb, the other properties mentioned above held (rigid order, etc.); this tells us that the clitic group forms a morphological unit, whether cliticized on the verb or not. Interpolation with strong XPs and heavy adverbs became rare during the 15th century, perhaps because a scrambling position intervening between VP and T disappeared at that time, but interpolation with a small set of VP adverbs was the norm until the 18th century: *pas* “not”, *point* “not”, *plus* “no-more”, *jamais* “never”, *rien* “nothing”, *bien* “well”, *mieux* “better”, *trop* “too-much” (Galet, 1971), as exemplified in (25).

- (25) a. Je vous ordonne de ne le point voir au parloir
 I 2DAT.PL order of NEG 3ACC.SG not see at the parlor
I order you to not see him at the parlor.
 (Diderot [1784] *La religieuse*, 10/18, p. 228.)
- b. Et ai-je lieu de n' en pas espérer un succès aussi favorable?
 and have-I reason of NEG GEN not hope a success as favorable
And should I not hope for as favorable a success from it? (Cyrano [1655])

- c. ...pour compenser sa mollesse et me mieux faire avaler
 ...to compensate his weakness and 1DAT.SG better make swallow
 la pilule
 the pill

...to compensate his weakness and make me better swallow the pill

(Lesage A.-R. [1732], *Histoire de Gil Blas de Sant*: 745.) (In *Romanciers du 18E S.*, Ed. Etiemble, T.1. Paris, Gallimard, 1960.)

It is only during the 18th century that weak object pronouns stopped raising systematically to T in infinitivals and remained with the verb within the VP, the grammar of Contemporary French.

Whatever the exact account of these facts, the interpolation of an element between the pronoun and the verb indicates that, even though Old French weak object pronouns had morphophonological properties which were similar to those used to argue for an affixal approach to contemporary French object markers, and even though they were always adjacent to the verb during the oldest period of French, they were not affixes on the verb. Their placement under T was independent of that of V, so that when the infinitival verb stopped raising to T, pronouns continued to do so for centuries. Hence, affix-like morphophonological properties should not be taken as necessarily reflecting lexical affixation, as the elements involved may have autonomous syntactic behavior.

The evidence discussed leads us to conclude that at least until the 18th century, French weak object pronouns, or object markers, were manipulated by the computational system independently of the verb and were clitic elements rather than affixes. This conclusion is strengthened by the observation that *en* and *y* did not always undergo the changes at the same time as the other object markers, suggesting that object markers are positioned according to their own individual specifications, something which, again, is difficult to reconcile with an affixal approach. For example, while we said that weak object pronouns remained preverbal in coordinated main clauses until well into the 18th century, as can be seen in (26), *en* and *y* anticipated the postverbal position in this context in imperatives, as evidenced by the comment of the grammarian Restaud, cited by de Kok (1985: 315). Restaud says that the position for weak object pronouns in imperatives is normally preverbal, but he adds the commentary in (27) stating that *en* and *y* are “more normal” in postverbal position after a coordinator (for more examples and a discussion, see Hirschbühler & Labelle 2003):

- (26) Sois homme **et me** fais voir le fils d' Agamemnon
 be man and 1DAT.SG make see the son of Agamemnon.
Be a man and let me see the son of Agamemnon

(Guimond de la Touche [1758], *Iphigenie En Tauride*. (p. 240); in *Repertoire Gen. du Theatre Fr.*, T.26. Paris, Menard & Raymond 1813.)

- (27) Restaut [1766]: 241; in de Kok, 1985: 315):

'il est plus ordinaire de dire, écoutez ma proposition, et réfléchissez-y; recevez ma remontrance, & profitez-en; que y réfléchissez, en profitez.'

'it is more normal to say écoutez ma proposition, et réfléchissez-y; recevez ma remontrance, & profitez-en than to say y réfléchissez, en profitez.'

On other occasions, *en* and *y* displayed a behavior more conservative than the other object markers. For example, they climbed out of infinitives introduced by modals for a longer time than the other clitics. Such examples are found until the 19th century.

- (28) Si l' on n' y doit pas céder ⟨y⟩ toujours.
 if one NEG DAT must not yield always
If one must not yield to-it always

(Sainte-Beuve Ch [1840], Port-Royal T. 1 (Paris, Hachette 1860.))

- (29) Oh! Ce livre, le monde entier l' attend!

Oh! this BOOK, the whole world is waiting for it!

Et il n' en veut rien dire ⟨en⟩, pas même le titre!
 and he NEG GEN wants nothing say, not even the title

And he doesn't want to say anything about it, not even the title!

(Pailleron E. [1869], *Le Monde où l'on s'ennuie*. In *Pieces de Theatre*, T.3. Paris, Calmann-Levy 1895.)

Interpolation of an adverb between the object marker and the infinitival verb is occasionally found until well into the 20th century with *en* and *y*, but not with the other object markers. A particularly revealing example is that in (31), dating from 1966, where *en* precedes the negative adverb, but *se* follows it.

- (30) a. Je préférerais n' en rien dire ⟨en⟩
 I would-prefer NEG GEN nothing say
I would prefer not say anything about it.

- b. J'ai regretté de n'y pas être allé ⟨y⟩
 I have regretted of NEG LOC not be gone
 I regretted not to have gone there.

- (31) ...de mourir et de pleurer à n'en plus finir à n' en plus se
 ...to die and to cry to NEG GEN more finish, to NEG GEN more REFL
 réveiller jamais
 awaken ever
...to die and to cry endlessly, to the point of never waking up ever

(René Fallet [1966]. *Banlieue Sud-Est*. Denoël 221)

These peculiar properties of *en* and *y* tell us that French object markers are not treated as a homogeneous set of affixes, but as a heterogeneous set of pronominal

- (34) Njúchi zi-na-wa-lum-a alenje
 10.bees 10.SM-PAST-2.OM-bit-INDIC 2.hunters
The bees bit them, the hunters. (Bresnan & Mchombo 1987, ex. 2)

Hence Chicheŵa object markers are pronominal in nature, and not agreement markers.⁴ Bresnan (1997, 2001) further makes a distinction between full pronouns and reduced pronouns, the latter including bound pronouns and clitics. She argues that reduced pronouns are universally specialized for topic anaphoricity; they are always anaphoric to a preceding discourse referent, whereas free pronouns are used by default to introduce new topics or for contrast, and they may refer anaphorically only where no bound pronoun is available. In this typology, Chicheŵa object markers are bound pronouns, appearing as affixes on the verb. As a result, (35) is ungrammatical, because the lion is given information, hence discourse anaphoric, and consequently a bound pronoun/object marker would be required instead of a full pronoun:

- (35) *Fisi a-na-dy-á íwo mkángó uwu
 hyena SM-REC.PAST-eat-INDIC 3.it 3.lion this
The hyena ate it, this lion. (Bresnan & Mchombo 1987, ex. 16b)

Now, having the semantics of a pronominal and being in complementary distribution with a full NP is not evidence of syntactic autonomy. Bresnan (1997) considers Chicheŵa object markers as pronominal affixes, and not as clitics. From what we have said until now, nothing prevents us from assuming that the Chicheŵa pronominal object marker is a type of derivational morpheme absorbing one argument on the argument-structure of the verb in the manner described in section 2. Such a valency-absorbing approach would account for the complementary distribution between the object marker and the NP, and it may also account for (35), given a proper theory of the referential properties of internally bound arguments. Mchombo (1993, 2001, 2002), however, provides evidence from Chicheŵa suggesting that object markers are syntactic objects; in his 2001 and 2002 papers, he further claims that they are clitics.

In Chicheŵa and closely related Bantu languages, argument structure changing affixes (passive, causative, applicative, etc.) are extensions appearing as suffixes after the verbal root. To the left of the root are found tense and modality prefixes, the subject marker, and object markers.

- (36) [Subject Marker – Tense – Mood – Object Marker [[_{VB} [Verbal Root] Extensions] FV]]

4. The authors show that some Bantu languages are now undergoing grammaticization of object markers into agreement markers (Bresnan & Mchombo 1987: 777).

The suffixal extensions attach to the verb root first, forming the verbal base (VB). To the base is affixed a final vowel (FV) sometimes glossed as indicative/subjunctive mood; the base with the final vowel forms the verb stem. The verb stem is the locus of various processes like vowel harmony, tone inheritance, and nominalization, which suggests that it is a lexical domain. The prefixes do not participate in these processes, a fact taken by Mchombo (2002) to argue that they are post-lexical clitics. Crucially, object markers pattern like the other prefixes in this respect. Notice that this already hints at the fact that the language does not treat them as argument-structure changing elements, contrary to what we might expect if we believe them to be valency absorbers.

Consider now the reflexive and reciprocal morphemes. The two morphemes appear in different positions of this schema. The reflexive morpheme *dzi* is an object marker. It immediately precedes the verb stem (37), and in those Bantu languages where only one object marker is possible, such as Chicheŵa, it cannot co-occur with another object marker (38).

- (37) Mkângo u-na-dzí-súpul-a
 3.lion 3.SM-PST-REFL-bruise-FV
The lion bruised itself. (Mchombo 1993, ex. 4a)

- (38) *Mkângo u-na-dzí-wa-pats-a alenje
 3.lion 3.SM-PST-REFL-2.OM-give-FV 2-hunters
The lion gave itself (them) the hunters. (Mchombo 1993, ex. 5a)

In contrast, the reciprocal marker *an* follows the verb like the argument structure changing extensions (39). Mchombo (1993) says that the reciprocal interacts with the other extensions; for example, (40) is interpreted as [CAUSE [HIT-RECIP]]: the reciprocal affects the subject of the root verb, and not that of the derived causative verb.

- (39) Mbidzi nd' nkhandwe zi-ku-mény-an-a
 10.zebras and 10.foxes 10.SM-PRES-hit-RECIP-FV
The zebras and the foxes are hitting each other. (Mchombo 1993, 15b)

- (40) Mbidzi zi-ku-mény-an-its-a nkhandwe
 10.zebras 10.SM-PRES-hit-RECIP-CAUS-FV 10.foxes
The zebras are making the foxes fight one another. (Mchombo 1993, 16)

Mchombo (1993) shows that the reflexive and reciprocal morphemes have properties corresponding to their respective positions. The reciprocal is involved in the phonological processes affecting the Verb Stem like vowel harmony. It also participates in nominalization, a process whereby a verb stem is turned into a noun by replacing the final vowel *a* with either *i* or *o*, then prefixing the appropriate class-marker.

- (41) teng-an-a 'take each other' mténg-an-o 'death pact'
 (42) gwiriz-an-a 'agree' chigwiriz-an-o 'cooperation' (Mchombo 1993, 11)

The reciprocal is reduplicated with the verbal stem; crucially neither the object markers nor the reflexive reduplicate with the stem (Mchombo gives no translation for (44)–(45)):

- (43) Alenje a-na-[tém-ér-ân-a][tém-ér-ân-a] nzimbe
 2.hunters 2.SM-PST-CUT-APPL-RECIP 9.sugar-cane
The hunters cut for each other totally the sugar-cane. (Mchombo 1993, 13b)
- (44) *Mbidzi zi-ku-[i-gw-ets-a][i-gw-ets-a] mitengo mnkhalango
 10.zebras 10.SM-PRES-OM-fall-cause 4.trees 18.9.forest
 (Mchombo 1993, 14a)
- (45) *Mbidzi zi-ku-[dzi-thamangitsa][dzi-thamangitsa] mnkhalango
 10.zebras 10.SM-PRES-REFL-chase 18.9.forest
 (Mchombo 1993, 14c)

The reciprocal appears in bare imperatives, a construction formed with a bare verb stem.

- (46) Mang-ir-an-a-ni nyumbá zólimba
 build-APPL-RECIP-FV-PL 10.houses 10.SM-strong
Build one another firm houses. (Mchombo 1993, 19a)

The reflexive morpheme, like other object markers, is excluded from the same construction, and, according to Mchombo, it can only form an imperative with a subjunctive form of the verb, where the final vowel is *e*. (Here, a reviewer points out that other non reflexive object markers are possible in the imperative, even without the subjunctive, suggesting that the reflexive has perhaps a different status, and undermining Mchombo's argument.)

- (47) Dzi-máng-ir-é nyumbá zólimba
 REFL-build-APPL-SUBJUNCTIVE 10.houses 10.SM-strong
Build yourself firm houses. (Mchombo 1993, 19b)

The above morphophonological arguments clearly suggest that the reflexive, and by extension the other object markers, have a status distinct from that of the reciprocal morpheme. Mchombo (1993) further shows that they contribute differently to the interpretation, over and above the difference between reflexive and reciprocal meaning. The reflexive sentence in (48) is ambiguous between strict and sloppy identity: it can mean that the hunters despise themselves more than the fishermen despise them, that they despise themselves more than they despise

the fishermen, or that they despise themselves more than the fishermen despise themselves. The reciprocal in (49) is unambiguous, allowing only the sloppy identity reading: the hunters despise each other more than the fishermen despise each other.

(48) Alenje á-ma-dzi-nyóz-á kupósá asodzi
 2.hunters 2.SM-HAB-REFL-despise-FV exceeding 2.fishermen
The hunters despise themselves more than the fishermen. (Mchombo 1993, 20a)

(49) Alenje á-ma-nyóz-an-á kupósá asodzi
 2.hunters 2.SM-HAB-despise-RECIP-FV exceeding 2.fishermen
The hunters despise each other more than the fishermen. (Mchombo 1993, 20b)

Mchombo argues that the difference is explained if the reciprocal is a derivational morpheme, deriving intransitive reciprocal verbs. The only argument of the reciprocal is its subject. This accounts for the unambiguity of (49): in the second part of the comparative, *asodzi* “fishermen” can only be the subject of the verb. The ambiguity of the reflexive, on the other hand, follows if the verb is transitive. The reflexive behaves like an argument, specifically an anaphor that needs to be bound to the subject. Contrary to the reciprocal, it does not derive an intransitive verb. In consequence, in the second part of the comparative, the argument can be either the subject or the object of the transitive verb.

The conclusion reached by Mchombo is that the reflexive morpheme is a syntactic argument, a pronominal object of the verb, and the same holds for object markers. This is why he treats these elements as clitics. The reciprocal morpheme, on the other hand, is an argument-changing lexical operator. In Chicheŵa, the verbal base, including the reciprocal morpheme, is a lexical element; the object markers, however, have syntactic properties.

To this evidence, we may add a few other points. Firstly, Kimenyi (1980: 180) points out that in Kinyarwanda the locative may be “incorporated”, “even without being promoted to direct object status”, meaning, if I understand correctly, that there is no applicative morpheme justifying its presence. If this is correct, it means that at least some unselected adjuncts may appear as object markers on the Bantu verb in some languages. This would indicate that object markers are not simply thematic argument binders on the verb, an observation that parallels the one we made for French in section 2.

Also, in Kinyarwanda, a Bantu language accepting more than one object marker on the verb, there is a rigid order of object markers according to a thematic hierarchy: patient/theme > goal > beneficiary, with exceptions, e.g., the first person appears next to the verb root (but in front of the reflexive) whatever its thematic role (Duranti 1979; Kimenyi 1980). However, the position of the

locative object marker is mobile within the sequence of object markers (Kimenyi 1980: 183):

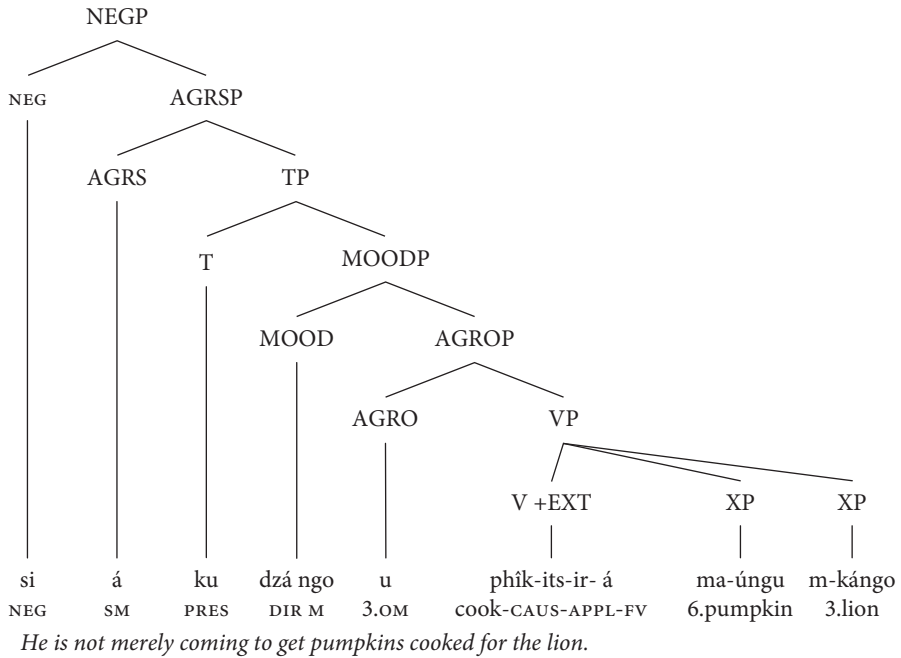
- (50) a. Ba- ra- **ha-** zi- tu- gu- he- er- a
2.SM-T/A- **16.OM**-10.OM-1PL.OM-2SG.MO-give-APPL-VF
- b. Ba- ra- zi- **ha-** tu- gu- he- er- a
2.SM -T/A-10.OM -**16.OM** -1PL.OM -2SG.MO -give-APPL-VF
- c. Ba- ra- zi- tu- **ha-** gu- he- er- a
2.SM -T/A-10.OM - 1PL.OM -**16.OM** -2SG.MO -give-APPL-VF
- d. Ba- ra- zi- tu- gu- **ha-** he- er- a
2.SM -T/A-10.OM- 1PL.OM - 2SG.MO - **16.OM** -give-APPL-VF
They are giving them to us for you. (Kimenyi 1980: 183, ex. 18)

In Kihaya the instrumental also seems to have some mobility (Duranti 1979: 41). This mobility of some object markers suggests that the sequence of object markers is not lexically specified, but constructed in accordance with constraints that may be thematic, related to the person of the object marker or others. If an object marker does not interact with the constraints, its position is free. While this mobility can be derived in the lexicon, it is more typical of syntactic computation. (See Bresnan & Mchombo 1995 for the syntactic nature of locative class markers in the nominal domain in Chichewa.)

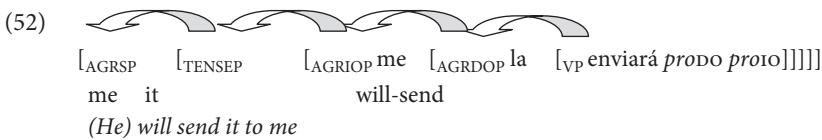
4. Are Romance clitics and Bantu object markers amenable to a unified analysis?

I have shown that French clitics and Chichewa object markers are syntactic elements. That does not mean that they are the same type of element. In contrast to Romance clitics, Bantu object markers appear to always attach to a verb base which includes the head selecting the corresponding argument (except perhaps for some locatives). Bantu object markers do not have the displacement property of Romance clitics. Their position with respect to the verb stem is also always to the left, while that of Romance clitics alternates between left and right. Despite these distinct properties, I want to show in this section that, instead of focusing on the differences, some analyses bring out the similarities between these arguments, and by doing so offer insights into the crosslinguistic similarities between reduced pronominals.

Consider the following tree, apparently proposed for Bantu by Gadelii (2000) – cited in Petzell (2004) – on the basis of Mchombo (1997: 191).



This structure is similar in many respects to the one proposed in various papers for Romance. To take one example, consider the derivation proposed for Spanish by Franco (2000: 181), schematized in (52), simplifying from Franco, who constructs inflectional morphology in syntax by having the verb raise from its VP internal position all the way up to AgrS.



In this structure, clitics are generated under agreement heads between Tense and the VP. The tensed verb, passing through these heads, picks up the clitics on its way to the tense and subject agreement nodes. It should be clear that the position of object clitics in (52) is comparable to that of object markers in (51). This suggests the interesting possibility that Romance and Bantu object markers are generated in the same structural position. The difference between Romance and Bantu would then follow from the fact that in Romance, but not in Bantu, object markers raise to a higher head, either independently, as was certainly the *case* from Old French until at least the 18th century, or with the verb, as in (52). A second difference is that, in Romance, the various projections are syntactically and morphologically autonomous; adverbs

may intervene between them. Mchombo (2002: 193) presents for Bantu a tree very similar to the one above, but he claims that the elements to the left of the verbal stem are clitic heads, not dominated by XP, but forming a complex verb with the stem. In this perspective, the various heads are specified as being proclitics on the verbal stem, preventing any item from intervening. As for the position of negation, Zanuttini (1997) discusses two types of negative markers in Romance, pre-Infl and post-Infl. Pre-infl negative markers, found in Spanish and Italian (53a), occupy a position parallel to that in (51) (to the left of the weak agreement subject clitics found in some Romance varieties). A post-Infl negative marker is best observed in Quebec French (and other colloquial varieties), where *pas* surfaces after the tensed auxiliary (53b). For standard French, Pollock (1989) assumes that the negative marker *ne* is base-generated next to *pas*, and that it cliticizes to the left of the clitic group.

- (53) a. Maria **non** glielo ha dato. (Italian, Zanuttini 1997: 18, ex. 3a)
 Maria NEG 3.DAT.3.ACC AUX given
- b. Marie lui a **pas** donné. (colloquial French; *le+lui* reduced to *lui*)
 Marie 3.DAT AUX NEG given
Marie didn't give it to him.

If we consider now the order of clitics within the clitic group, we may turn to Cocchi (2000), who views Bantu object markers as representing “the morphologically bound counterpart of the free Romance clitics, which have a very similar syntactic behaviour” (p. 90) and who develops a unitary analysis of clitic groups within the framework of Manzini and Savoia (1998, 2002). In this framework, clitics are viewed as bundles of features including person, number, definiteness, categorial, and aspectual features. In a nutshell, Manzini and Savoia postulate (54) as the rigidly ordered universal sequence of clitic shells occurring between the complementizer C^0 and the inflectional head I^0 .

- (54) $C^0 D^0 NUM^0 N^0 P^0 OR^0 LOC^0 MEAS^0 I^0$
 (where D = definiteness; NUM = number; N = noun; P = person; OR = originator; LOC = locative; MEAS = measure)

The rightmost clitic heads, OR(iginator), LOC(ative) and MEAS(ure) are aspectual in the sense of Borer (1994) and Tenny (1994), and represent respectively the (proto-) Agent of the event, the delimitation of the event in the locative sense, and the incremental Theme. It is also assumed that the head $MEAS^0$ combines two different aspectual features: Extension (path) and Terminus (goal, receiver, final destination), making it compatible with Themes and Goals. The four clitic heads above these are inflectional, consisting of Phi-features – person (P) and number (NUM) –, definiteness (D) and categorial information (N). This clitic sequence may be reduplicated within the complementizer system.

On the basis of their feature content, each clitic head is compatible with certain clitics: MEAS⁰ will be lexicalized by 3rd person Patient/Theme or Goal arguments, or by partitives; P⁰ by 1st and 2nd person clitics; N⁰ and NUM⁰ by 3rd persons (in line with the idea that 3rd persons are default or non-persons, hence incompatible with P⁰), LOC⁰ by locatives, and D⁰ by subject expletives and locatives which do not exhibit phi-features. The bundle of features corresponding to a clitic being compatible with various heads, it is assumed that the specific heads which a clitic may lexicalize is determined parametrically by each language. A clitic will lexicalize the most prominent among its features, modulo the micro-parameters fixed in the grammar of the language. This flexibility allows the authors to account for the limited crosslinguistic variation among clitic groups. The inflectional features are considered semantically uninterpretable, contrary to the aspectual features; consequently, if a clitic occurs under an inflectional head, it needs to attract an aspectual feature to be semantically identified.

Take for example, the difference in clitic order between French and Italian illustrated in (54)–(55) (Cocchi 2000: 96, ex. 13–14). In French and in Italian, the 3rd person dative clitic *lui/glie* is assumed to lexicalize N⁰ (and attract the aspectual feature +Term(inus) of Meas⁰), while the 3rd person accusative clitic *le/lo* would lexicalize the +Ext(ension) feature of Meas⁰ in Italian, but it would be parametrically specified as lexicalizing Num⁰ in French (a head compatible with 3rd person clitics), from where it would attract +Ext. This would account for the difference in clitic sequence between the two languages.

(55) C⁰ D⁰ NUM⁰ N⁰ P⁰ OR⁰ LOC⁰ MEAS⁰ I⁰
 glie lo dà (Italian)
 (+Term) (+Ext)

(56) C⁰ D⁰ NUM⁰ N⁰ P⁰ OR⁰ LOC⁰ MEAS⁰ I⁰
 le lui donne (French)
 (+Ext)(+Term)
 gives it to him

Cocchi proposes that Bantu languages where only one object marker is possible are parameterized as allowing only one head to be lexicalized; it is assumed that this head is Meas⁰, and that Themes and Goals (referred to by Cocchi as Direct Objects – DO – and Indirect Objects – IO) compete to lexicalize this position (compatible with both thematic roles).

(57) a. Mtoto a-na-m-nunu-li-a mwanamke matunda (Swahili)
 boy 1.SM-TNS-1.IO-buy-APPL-I woman fruit
 The boy buys the woman fruit. (Cocchi 2000: 87, ex. 4a)

b. Mtoto a-na-ki-nunu-a (kitabu) (Swahili)
 boy 1.SM-TNS-1.DO-buy-I (BOOK)
 The boy buys it (the book). (Cocchi, 2000: 97, ex. 15)

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