Shona Subjects are Subjects

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Lack of Weak Crossover

Shona pre-verbal subjects do not trigger weak crossover, consistent with pre-verbal subjects binding from an A rather than pre-A position. In applicative constructions, raising of the subject with passives repairs binding violations.

| (5) | * mu-kadzi a-ka-uru-r-a [mani y-ake] [mu-rume] |
| (6) | [mu-rume] a-ka-uru-r-w-a [mani y-ake] |


The woman killed the man for his money [11] The man was killed for his money

(7) murume, akaurayirwa [lupw/loup marizake] [u-p t]

Locative inversion presents another environment where weak crossover can be tested. If locatives in these constructions raise from an internal argument or adjunct position, the raising over the logical subject sets up a crossover environment as in Example (8). Under an A-position analysis, the following should be ungrammatical. This argument would fail if the locative were generated externally. However, if that were the case, Example (9) would be ungrammatical.

| (8) | mu-mba, m-aka-gar-a mu-nzidi wayo |
| (9) | [ku-danga kw-ayo, kw-aka-siv-a mombe, 17-kaa-


| (10) | nu-mnu
| (11) | a-no-bv-a [Gweru]

1-person 1SM-PRES-come-FV 5.Gweru 'Someone from Gweru will move to Harare soon.'

kana mbava-hi kawan-a mu-kova w-anu
9-if 9-thief 9-find 3-door 3-my w-aka-sham-a, i-cha-pind-a.
3SM-PST-open-FV 9SM-FUT-enter-FV 'If a robber finds my door open, he will go inside.'

r-imve zuva, mu-kadzi a-cha-sarudz-w-a kuve 5-some 5-day 1-woman 1-FUT-elect-PASS-FV 17-to mu-tungamiri. 1-leader 'Someday, a woman will be elected Prime Minister.'

Non-Specific Indefinite Pre-Verbal Subjects

The presence of pre-verbal subject A-position comes from pre-verbal NSI subjects, which would be unexpected under a topicalization analysis. First, while Shona answers often WH-subject questions with existential constructions, it does not disallow declarative answers (e.g. Q: ‘What happened last night? A: ? mnuhu akagogodza pagonhi’ A man knocked at the door) [12]. Then, when provided with six English sentences containing NSI subjects, our consultant translated three as simple active declaratives (Example (10)), two as existentials (Example (11)), and one as a passive (Example (12)) and confirmed their NSI interpretations.

| (12) | P-ane var-end-a ku-no-raur-a
| (13) | 16-be-with-FV 2SM-go-go 15SM-PRES-fish-FV nhisi tomorrow 'Some people went fishing yesterday.'

Tsoka y-angu i-no-fanir-a
9-foot 9-my 9SM-PRES-should-FV ku-taris-w-a na-ch-remba. 15SM-look_at-PASS-FV by-7-doctor 'A doctor should look at my foot.'

Verbal Argument Constructions

Active sentences typically exhibit SVO surface order. Subject raising is optional for passives.

(1) Shingi a-ka-bik-a na-hanga. Shingi 1SM-PST-cook-FV 6-pumpkins 'Shingi cooked pumpkins.' [1]

(2) ma-nanga a-ka-bik-w-a na-Shingi. 6-pumpkins 6SM-PST-cook-PASS-FV by-Shingi 'Pumpkins were cooked by Shingi.'

In locative inversion, a locative phrase appears pre-verbally in subject agreement with the verb, and therefore, raising to subject is A’-movement [1, 4, 8]. We argue in favor of the subject in A'-position analysis for Shona on the basis of non-topics in the pre-verb position as well as the lack of crossover violations.

References


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Asymmetries as Ambiguity

A pattern interpreted as strong crossover has been observed in Shona passive applicatives [2, 10]. These are typically symmetric in the language, but when the applicative object is a reflexive, direct object raising is disallowed.