

Ekegusii DP and its Sentential Symmetry: A Minimalist Inquiry

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Abstract

This paper hypothesizes that the Ekegusii sentential agreement has a symmetrical relationship with the Ekegusii Determiner Phrase internal concord; and that the feature checking theory and full interpretation (FI) in the Minimalist Program (MP) can adequately analyse the internal structure of the Ekegusii DP. It aims at studying concord in the Ekegusii DP in order to determine its syntactic function; and to find out the relationship between the agreement pattern in the Ekegusii sentence (INFL) and the concord of the Ekegusii DP. The paper thus examines the nominal structure of Ekegusii, highlighting the noun class system and concord between the noun and its modifiers. It concludes that the principles of feature checking and FI in the MP are mutually crucial in ensuring that Ekegusii constructions (DP and sentence) are grammatical (converge). In a sentence, case features are checked by noun movement and tense features are checked by verb movement. (Feature checking, full interpretation, concord, Ekegusii, determiner phrase, sentential symmetry, Minimalist program)

1.0 Introduction

Ekegusii is a Bantu language spoken by Abagusii people of the present Kisii and Nyamira counties in Kenya. It is classified as a Central Bantu language (Guthrie, 1971). Maho (2008) further classifies the language as JE42 following Guthrie's E42 label of Ekegusii. The approximate number of speakers of the Ekegusii language in Kenya is given at 2,205,669 (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2010). Ekegusii is closely related to such Bantu language families as Kuria, Zanaki, Shashi, Ngurimi, Nata, Logoli and Ikusu (Guthrie 1941; Mabururu, 1994; Nurse & Philipson, 1980). The language has two main dialects: the Rogoro and the Maate dialects which relate to the Northern (Standard) and Southern dialects respectively (Bosire, 1993; Mecha, 2004; Basweti, 2005; Mose, 2012). The paper draws its data from the standard 'Rogoro' dialect.

This study, like many others before (Abney 1987, Basweti et al. 2014; Basweti, 2005; Beina, 2013; Haraiwa, 2005; Mose, 2012; Nyombe, 2004; Tang, 1988 among others) analyses the Noun Phrase (NP) as a Determiner Phrase (DP).

In the Minimalist Program (MP), the Determiner is the head of the DP and the NP is the Complement. Since the paper examines the classification of Ekegusii nominal segments and the concordial agreement between the NP and its modifiers, a brief introduction of the agreement system in the language will suffice. The concord in the language's DP has a syntactic function. It relates the agreement pattern in the sentence (IP) to the concord of the DP. For an exhaustive understanding of the relationship between the sentence and the determiner phrase, it will be almost inevitable to examine the application of the feature checking and full interpretation principles especially in verbal movement in the sentence. The working of Chomsky's economy principles¹ will be useful to the present paper. Before embarking on the morphosyntax of the Ekegusii determiner phrase, this paper will address the theoretical framework adopted for the study as well as the morphology of Ekegusii with major focus on the Ekegusii noun class system.

2.0. Theoretical Framework

The Minimalist program (MP), a theoretical framework adopted for the present study, is basically a development of the 1981 principles and parameters theory by Naom Chomsky in his endeavour to generate a theory of universal grammar (UG). The MP was fast muted by Chomsky (1989) and later rolled out the minimal inquiry at analyzing any natural language (Chomsky 1993, 1995). Mose (2012:vi) in her words described the MP as "...a theory of grammar whose core assumption is that grammar should be described in terms of the minimal set of theoretical descriptive apparatus." In a review of the Naom Chomsky's Minimalist program (1995), Zwart (1998) argues that Chomsky's agenda is to relate sounds with meaning in language. He proposes that "the language faculty involves a computational system that feeds into the two components of the mind/brain dealing with sound and meaning: the articulatory- perceptual system and the conceptual international system". Chomsky notes that there is an interaction between the two levels of interface: the Phonetic Form (PH) and the Logical Form (LF) *vis a vis* the computational system of the human language.

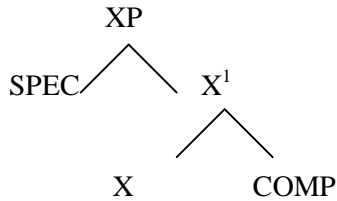
Chomsky moves away from the Government and binding syntactic levels, that is, the deep structure, surface structure, Logical Form and Phonological/Phonetic Form to just two interface levels; (PLL) Chomsky's motivation is governed the perception that language is man's natural and innate endowment in his/her brain.(Newmeyer 1998). Based on Saussure's '*langue*' and '*parole*', Chomsky literally expands, his "competence" and "performance". This is the Generative Grammar theoretical basis which as Schroeder (2002) argues culminates to the MP. A speaker of a language can be said to have competence if he/she has the generative grammar capability of a native speaker to use language (Chomsky, 1965; Weibelhuth, 1995) in real-time social contexts. In his attempt to develop a simple theory which can be used to describe human language; something which is natural and which literally explains how human being are designed and endowed with (Aitcheson, 1999; Cowper 1992; Newmeyer, 1998), Chomsky came up with the reductionist MP.

In the MP, there is a computational system in which derivations influenced by morphosyntactic properties normally takes place. From the lexicon of a specific language, the system produces two interface levels after spell out; the PH and LF. The process of gathering both lexical and morphosyntactic information is referred to as numeration. Afterwards, merge, which is computational process of formation of partial trees and projections using the morphosyntactic and lexical elements takes over.

The MP borrows the X-bar theoretical model of the specifier-head, head-head and head- complement relationship (Chomsky, 1993). However, in the structure building process of the MP, necessity determines what should be licensed by both morphosyntactic and lexical evidence from the lexicon of the language in question. The MP may thus defy the maximum projection principle (Chomsky, 1981). The move X theory plays a critical role in MP especially in the movement of constituents but perimeters like X-bar theory, theta theory, case filter, subjacency, move, C-command condition were put in place to manage the movement and over generalization (Cowper 1992: 127). Movement in MP is strictly for feature - checking purposes.

¹ Some of these principles include Procrastinate, Greed, Last Resort and Shortest Move. See Marantz (1995: 354.359) among others.

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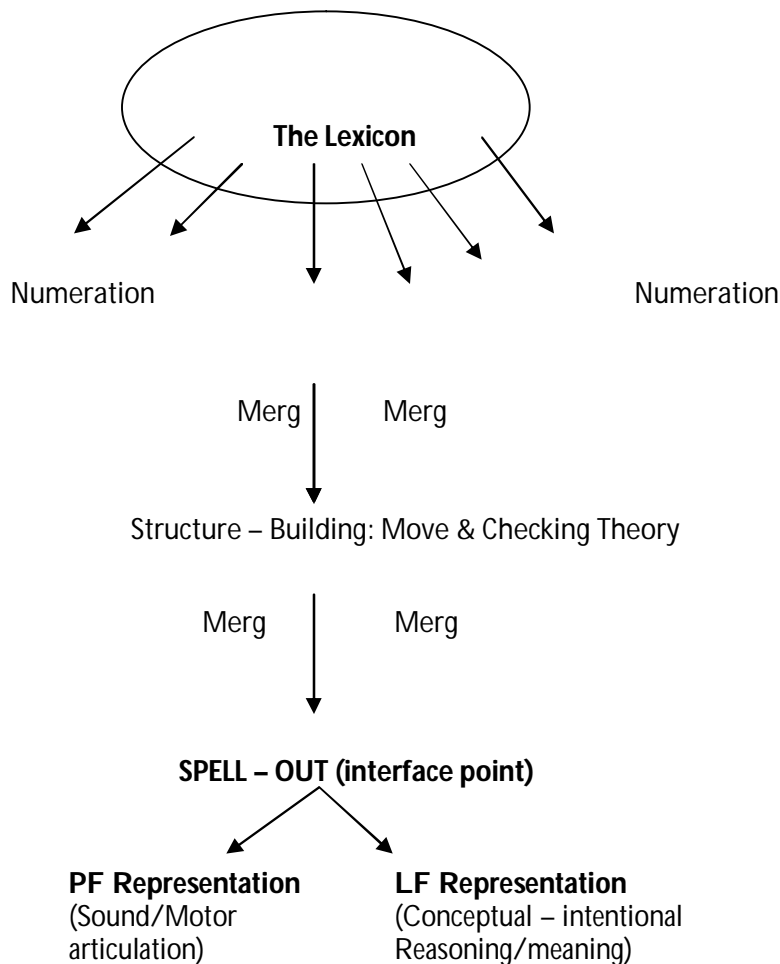


In the figure above, adopted by the MP, the SPEC position checks for case in the checking theory. Weibelhuth(1995) argues that checking is meant to eliminate morphological features which might cause derivations to either crash (be ungrammatical) or converge (be grammatical). For both the IP and the NP, the accuracy of the inflectional features is checked based on where they occur in the sentence.

Building on Pollock (1989) Split-INFL-Hypothesis, which saw the split if the projection of functional heads - TP and AGRP to AGRs, TNS & AGRo, the theory uses TNS and AGR in checking Tense and Agreement features of the verb. Case and agreement features like class and number are also checked by raising them to SPEC – AGRs and SPEC- AGRo positions. The abstract feature checking occurs during the derivational process between the lexicon and the interface levels (Cook and Newson, 1996).

The computation of a grammatical representation (derivation) at last reaches a “spell out” point which determines the movement which will inform the phonological form (pronunciation) and movement the logical form. At this point, all operations between spell out and the two levels of interface are corrupted to avoid crashing. This is best captured in the Figure (2) below:

2.



Source: Basweti (2005:9)

2.1 The Morphological Structure of the Ekegusii Nominal

When looking at the morphological structure of the Ekegusii noun, the main focus should be on its morphological constituents. Therefore, in the analysis of the structure of the noun in a Bantu language, Welmers (1973) proposes that it ought to be viewed as constituting a noun prefix and a root. The two constituents that make up the Ekegusii nominal are important because the prefix, for instance, is an indicator of the class. The prefix thus functions as a classifier. Therefore, affixes are attached to the nominal root to form the Ekegusii noun. The Ekegusii nominal is realized as either a simple or derived nominal. Example (3) below illustrates a simple noun.

3	Singular	Plural	Gloss
	O - mo - mura	a - ba - mura	
	pr. sing.pr.rt	pr plu.pr. rt	boy (s)

Of the Ekegusii nouns the simple nouns form the largest number as compared to the derived nominal². Example (4) shows an example of a derived nominal.

4	Singular	Plural	Gloss
	o - mo - rem - i	a - ba - rem - i	
	pr.sing.pr.dig dv	pr. plu.pr. did fv	diggers (s)

From Examples (3 and 4), the Ekegusii noun can be said to have three affixes attached to the nominal root: the pre-prefix, prefix and suffix. The prefix normally co-occurring with the pre-prefix is obligatorily attached to the root. The prefix qualifies a stem to become a noun by adding a morphological quality of either number or gender (class). Therefore, the pre-prefix and prefix are class markers which are realized differently in terms of number. Singular nominal forms are represented by such prefixes as {omo-}, {ege-}, {eri-}, {aka-} among others whereas plural forms are represented by such prefixes as {aba-}, {ebi-}, {ama-}, {eme-}. Prefixes like {obo-} and {oko-} introduce the classes of nouns that exist in invariant forms i.e. they do not change, both in their singular and plural forms.

2.2 The Ekegusii Noun Classification System

Being a Bantu language, the noun class system of Ekegusii typically takes a Bantu language noun class typology. The classification system is dictated morphologically by singular and plural prefixes attached to the noun-roots. This noun or nominal phrase has a concord system that normally exists structurally between either a noun and its modifiers or a subject nominal in a sentence with the predicate (see Table 1). Meinhof (1932), following Bleek (1971), who had classified Proto-Bantu based on semantic criteria, gives the prefix preceding noun stems, different classes (numbers). Osinde (1988) works out the different noun classes of Ekegusii using the Bleek (1971) criteria and Meinhof's noun classification system. Table 1 is therefore developed from the Meinhof (1932), Bleek (1971) and Osinde (1988) initiatives. It is important to note that from Osinde's (1988) classification, some noun prefixes like those in classes (14), (15) and (17) are the same for both singular and plural forms. The classes presented here are those of mass/uncountable or abstract nouns as opposed to the many other classes that stand for countable nouns.

2.3 Structural Description of the Noun Classes

The Ekegusii noun class system is based on a semantic criterion just like in any other Bantu language in the sense that the categorization is motivated by what the items(s)/object (s) are in the natural world. In the analysis below, this study notes that nouns with the same or similar meanings belong to the same noun class.

2.3.1 Class 1/2 Nouns

These noun classes are normally typically represented by prefixes {omo -} / {aba-}. {omo -} is singular prefix marker and {aba-} is a plural prefix marker. The two classes commonly consisted of human terms and other kinship or genealogical terms are shown in example (5) below:

5	Singular	Plural	Gloss
	o-m -amate	a-ba-amate	
	pr.sign.pr. rt	pr. plu.pr. rt	neighbour(s)

² These are nominal that are formed (derived) from verbs, that is the doer of the action in the verb.

The two prefixes used to be obligatorily occurring together in class 1 / 2 but in some kinship terms, they have been lost such that in class 1 the singular prefix marker {omo-} is now vestigial. This is illustrated in example (6) below.

6	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
	ng'ina	a-ba - ngina	
	mother	pr. plu.pr mother	mother (s)

Class I is indeed a marked class in the noun class system because instead of just being realized with the prefix marker {omo-} that is the pre-prefix {o-} and the singular prefix marker {mo-} this prefix marker has another realisation form that is? the variant {mw-} that however retains the pre-prefix {o-} to take the form {omw-}³ This is exemplified in (7) below.

7	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
i)	O-mw-ana	a- ba-ana	
	pr. sing.pr rt	pr. plu.pr.rt	Child (ren)

2.3.2 Class 3/4 Nouns

This pair is mainly characterised by the prefixes {omo-}, {eme-}. {omo-} as the singular prefix marker whereas {eme-} is the plural prefix marker. It is normally representative of names of plants, trees, some parts of the body and objects made from trees. An example (8) illustrates this.

8	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
	O- mo-te	e-me-te	
	pr.sing.pr.rt	pr. plu.pr. rt	tree (s)

Class 3/4 nouns may consist of those nouns that do not change in form whether they are used to mean singular or plural (many) / large amounts of something). Some of these are given in Example (9) below:

9	<i>Word</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
	O - mo - sunte	
	pr. sing.pr. rt	'Darkness'

Although Example (10) form of the noun can be used to denote large amounts of something, the language can also accept the plural forms of the above word taking the form {eme-} especially when talking about different types of these items. This is illustrated in Example (10) below.

10	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
	O - mo - sunte	e - me - sunte	
	pr. sing. pr. rt.	pr. plu. Pr. rt.	Darkness (different forms of)

2.3.3 Class 5/6 Nouns

These classes are introduced by prefixes {(e)ri-}/{ama-}. The prefix {eri-} or {ri-} is the singular marker whereas {ama-} marks the plural prefix. These classes constitute a variety of nouns ranging from body parts, plant parts, fighting objects and many other objects. In example (11) below, a few of these are shown.

11	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
	E - ri - iso	a - ma - iso	
	pr. sing. pr. rt.	pr. plu.pr. rt	Eye (s)

All the other noun classes can be analyzed using the above framework. In a nutshell, the 17 classes of Ekegusii nouns are distributed based on two criteria: occurrence in nature (semantically) and number system (countable or uncountable -morphologically). Since morphological information is important in this study, emphasis has been given on the singularity or plurality of the prefixes and/or the classes, in fact, the classes are spread into two main divisions, and that is, in every pair there is both a singular set and a plural set of nouns.

³ This explanation is an aspect of morphology which is interlinked to phonology, otherwise called amorphophonological elaboration.

Therefore, the class markers basically take the form: singular/plural prefixes although there are cases like in class 17 which takes a suffix. The semantic and morphological information of the Ekegusii nominal forms a basis for the analysis of the co-occurrence of the nominal with other elements either nominal internally or in a sentence.

2.4 The Noun and its Modifying Elements

Like in majority of Bantu languages, the Ekegusii noun determines the concordial realization in all the elements that post-modify it - the demonstratives (determiners). The study thus considers the relationship between these determiners and the noun in the Ekegusii DP.

2.4.1 The Noun Agreement with Demonstratives

Three sets of demonstrative can be established in Bantu languages (including Ekegusii) - depending on the position of the speaker or hearer. Demonstratives have been classified as either proximal (near to the speaker) or distal (distant from speaker) (Leech and Svartvik, 1975:225; 1994:269). Table 2 shows the occurrence of the Ekegusii demonstratives. Mabururu (1994) has done a classification similar to the one in Table 2. In Ekegusii, the class prefix of the noun in the NP determines the Concordial prefix attached to the demonstratives.

	cl.pref.	N.rt		cl.pref.	Dem.rt
12	O – mo -	nto	o	-	yo
	cl.l.sing	person	cl.l.agr		this
		“This person”			

The realization of the Ekegusii demonstratives and their agreement with the words in the different noun classes in the language is coded in the Table 3.

2.4.2 Noun Agreement with Possessives

Being one of the post-modifiers of the Ekegusii DP, the possessives also perform a determining function. Possession in Ekegusii is indicated either by use of possessive pronouns or by using a preposition.

2.4.2.1 Possessive Pronouns

Possessive pronouns are used to indicate ownership of something. The possessive pronoun in Ekegusii, as Osinde (1988) points out, is made up of three elements: the pronominal class concord, the connection {-a} (though not in all cases) and the possessive root. Using person and number criteria to classify Ekegusii possessive pronoun, six such pronouns are identified as indicated in Table 4. The pronominal/nominal class concordial prefix determines the prefix attached to the possessive pronoun. The noun thus shows predominance in determining the agreement pattern in the Ekegusii NP.

	cl. Pref.	N. rt		cl. Pref.	Poss. Rt
13	E-Bi-	koroto		Bi -	ane
	cl.8.pl	shoes		cl.8.Agr.	mine
		‘My shoes’			

In 13, the possessive pronoun does not possess a pre-prefix.

2.4.2.2 Possession in the Genitive NP

Ekegusii shows possession by use of different prepositions. The preposition form in Ekegusii {- a} is used to denote ownership and it links the noun with whatever is owned after its being attached to the concordial class prefix. The agreement pattern is still generated by and from the noun. Example:

	cl.pref	N .rt		cl.Pr.	Prep.	N
14	Ci -	ombe		ci -	o	Ontita
	cl.10.Agr	cow		cl.10.Agr.	of	Ontita
		‘Ontita’s cows’				

Depending on the class where the head noun belongs, the concordial prefix of the ‘possessive preposition’ might change in form as demonstrated in Table 5.

2.4.3 Noun Agreement with Quantifiers and Numerals

Quantifiers are grouped together with possessives and demonstratives as modifier determiners in many languages (Chomsky, 1991 a). Quantifiers are therefore nominal determiners used to denote quantity. Nyombe (2004) groups them together with numerals. However numerals can be further divided into ordinal and cardinal numerals. In Ekegusii, quantifiers can be definite (numerals) or indefinite. Example (15) below shows the first numerals, together with ‘ten’ and ‘a hundred’ in Ekegusii.

15 E-jemo (one)/I-bere(two)/I-sato(three)/I-komi(ten)and Ri-gana(a hundred)

Example (17) below shows some of the indefinite quantifiers on the other hand. These are used to indicate groups of people, objects or things that have been quantified. They include.

16 {- onsi} for ‘all’/{- nini}for ‘few’/{- nge}for ‘many’/ {- ke}for ‘some’

In Ekegusii, the agreement prefix for definite quantification is only overt for numerals Ejemo (one) up to Isano-Isato (eight). Otherwise the other numeral starting from ‘Kianda’ (nine) up to infinity have a zero agreement morpheme. The number agreement morpheme normally depends on the nominal class prefix of the post-modified noun.

	cl. pre.	N. rt	Agr.Pre.	N.rt	
17	A-ka-	mori	a - ka -		mo
	cl.12, sing	calf	cl.12. Agr.	One	
		‘One (small) calf’			

The different noun classes in Ekegusii thus, have different agreement prefixes added unto the numeral roots that admit the agreement morphemes.

In determining the noun post modification function in Ekegusii, quantifiers also agree with the noun forming a concordial relationship in the agreement prefixes attached to both the noun and the quantifiers’ roots. Example (18) demonstrates this:

18	cl.pr.	N. rt.	Agr.	Pref. Quant. rt	Gloss
	A- Ba-	nto	a – Ba	- nge	
	cl. 2. pl.	person	cl.2.Agr.	many	‘many people’

Just like numerals, the nominal concord with the quantifiers is determined by the noun class prefix. Table 6 shows the agreement prefixes in quantifiers in the various Ekegusii noun classes. From the Table, it can be noted that quantifiers’ agreement prefixes are determined by plural nominal classes, as in classes 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 and 16. The only exceptions are abstract nouns which take the concordial prefixes when they co-occur with the quantifiers.

2.4.4 Noun Adjective Agreement

Like demonstratives, possessives and quantifiers, adjectives post modify nouns and thus share agreement features with the modified noun, in as much as they behave like the other determiners by influencing element is the nominal class prefix that is taken up by the modifier adjective(s). In the examples below, we examine the internal concord in Ekegusii DPs involving adjectives.

19	cl. pref.	N.rt. Agr.	Pref. adj.rt	gloss
	omo -	twe	omo – nene	‘a big head’
	cl.sing	head	cl.Agr.big	

2.4.4.1 Complex Adjectives

Ekegusii has complex adjectives whereby more than one adjective co-occurs with a noun. This proves that the DP internal concord has full influence emanating from the noun class prefixes. Example (20) below shows a noun post modified with four adjectives.

20	Omo-iseke	omo-igweri	omo-itebere	omo-tambe	omo-keresito
	1.Agr girl	1 Agr. obedient	1.Agr, beautiful	1. Agr. tall	1.Agr. christian
	‘A beautiful, tall obedient Christian girl’				

It is important to note at this level that whenever more than four adjectives co-occur in the same NP/DP a conjunction is introduced between the last two adjectives.

The discussion on the morphological structure of the Ekegusii nominal brings out class, number and person as the domineering features of agreement which gives this study foundation for the core issue: morphosyntax.

3.0 Agreement in the Ekegusii Sentence

Taking the Minimalist Program basic sentence structure, Chomsky (1993: 7) following Abney (1987) proposes that a parallel between the sentence (IP) and the DP can be established. This paper does this by first providing evidence for the existence of agreement in the Ekegusii sentence. Agreement in this case is realized in terms of AGRsP (agreement subject phrase) and AGRoP (agreement object phrase). Chomsky’s sentence also comes out as a projection of the verb. This is related to Haegeman’s definition of a clause as “[a projection] of a V (VP) dominated by functional projections AGRP and TP” (1994:609).

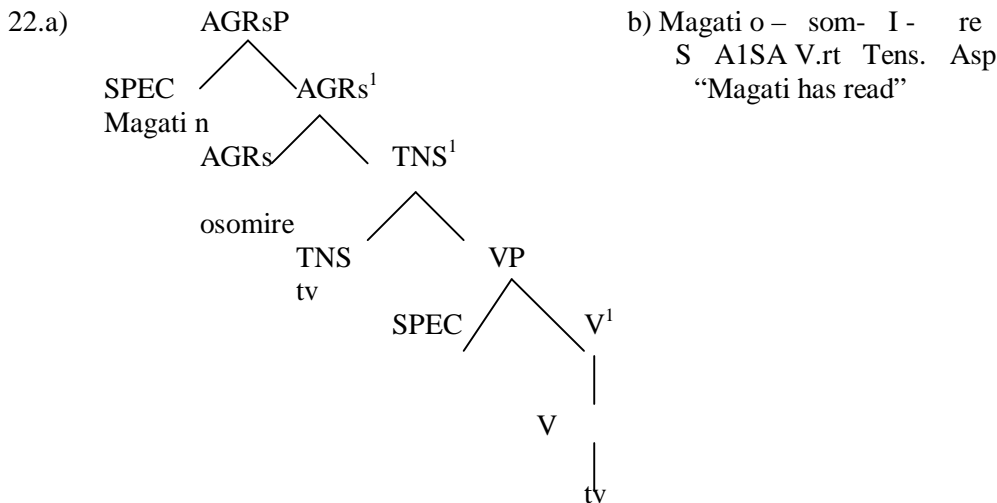
In the verb, both the Subject Agreement Marker (SAM) and Object Agreement Marker (OAM) are normally a composition of agreement features. The prefixes in a verb standing for the subject agreement and object agreement carry bundles of such features as person, number and class. In (21) below an Ekegusii verb exemplifies this:

21 Ba - mo - ram - i - re
 S.A2 O.A1 V.rt tns Asp
 “They have abused him/her.”

The subject agreement-marking prefix is (ba-) and the object agreement markers (-mo-) both contain the features: person agreements [3rd (third)], class Agreement (Noun Class – 1-2) And Number agreement⁴ (plural).

3.1 The Subject Agreement Phrase (AGRsP) in Ekegusii

In the new ‘minimalist’ basic sentence structure, AGR and TNS are the two abstract features that check the V-root (Haegeman 1996: 618). Since AGRP occurs in a higher position than the noun head and the TNS, the nominal subject features are raised to SPEC of AGRsP so as to check case features. Therefore, a typical Ekegusii Agreement subject Phrase (AGRsP) is illustrated in (22):



In the structure built above, (22a) from (22b), the nominal subject ‘Magati’ moves from the SPEC - VP (formerly VP internal subject position), and settles at SPEC-AGRs position where its agreement features of case, number and class are checked. Similarly, the verb ‘osomire’ moves out of the V landing at TNS-TNS¹ where its tense feature is checked ahead of its movement onto the AGRs – AGRs¹ where the subject class agreement features are checked.

⁴In a verb the subject dominates the object- number agreement because normally the subject is the doer of the action.

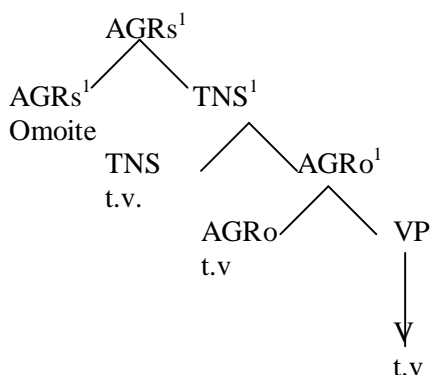
3.1.2 The Agreement Object Phrase (AGRoP) In Ekegusii

Ekegusii, being an agglutinating Bantu language, has an object prefix marker in its verb form or sentence. This calls for the establishment of the AGRoP between the TNS and VP nodes in the structure building process. Example (23) below illustrates this:

- 23 a) O - mo - it - e
 S.A O.A V.rt tns
 “You beat him/her.”

The tree diagram in (23b) below is the structure for the sentence (23a) above:

b)



In structure (23b) the verb, ‘*omoite*’ moves from the V to AGRo - AGRo¹ to check its objective case features before moving to the TNS - TNS¹ to check off tense feature. The verb moves to the AGRs - AGRs¹ where the subjective case features, class and number features are all checked. Therefore, this study establishes the necessity of verb movement. This movement is meant for feature checking so as to ensure full interpretation of the features such that the resultant surface form at LF and PF is grammatical. Specifier positions, especially SPEC/AGRs and that of the VP are left out of the structure for they are vacuous especially when the subject and object are covert. Case features for both the subject and object are checked at the SPEC/AGRsP and SPEC/AGRoP subjective/nominative case is checked by moving an overt subject to SPEC/AGRsP [see Magati in Example (22)] and objective or accusative case is checked at the SPEC/AGRoP.

3.2 Movement and Checking in the Ekegusii Sentence

In this analysis of the Ekegusii simple sentence we seek to establish the agreement relationship between the sentential constituents (DP subject, verb, DP objects) in Ekegusii. This analysis is based on the basic sentence structure in the MP (Chomsky 1995). Indeed the MP basic sentence structure is best accommodated by the morpho-syntax of Ekegusii. It is in the structure building process that both the noun and verb have to undergo move⁵ for the purpose of feature checking. In order to check both subjective and objective case features, the noun (nominal) moves to the (SPEC)ifier positions of AGRs and AGRo. Since verbs, as Cook and Newson (1996: 328) put it, “are inserted from the lexicon complete with all their features, which need to be checked off at some stage in the derivation to avoid these grammatical features surviving to the interface levels”, they move to the TNS/TNS¹ so as to check the tense feature. Being an SVO language, that is rich morphologically, the agreement of constituents of the Ekegusii sentence in the verb (subject and object prefix markers, the verb root or tense/aspect marker among others) is in line with the minimalist analysis of the morphosyntax of the sentence structure.

24. a) E-bi-tuma bi- a - rir - e e-mbori
 DP subject S.A Asp V.rt. tns DP object
 “The maize have eaten the goat” - literal meaning
- b) E-karamu ya-ne ya - bunek - i - re
 DP subject Poss. A S.A v.rt tns Asp
 “My pencil has broken.”

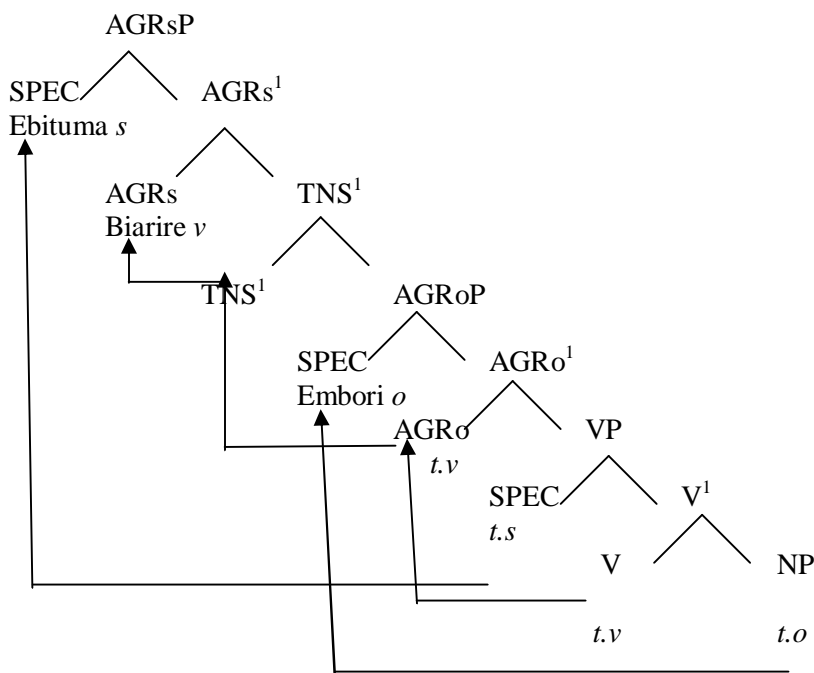
⁵ Cook & Newson (1996: 325); Newmeyer (1998)

Examples (24a & b) shows transitive and intransitive sentences in Ekegusii. In both cases, agreement features are commonplace.

In the production of Example (24a), the derivation of structure (25) takes time to be built following the dictates of the economy principles: Shortest move, Greed and Procrastinate that constrains a computation thus delaying the action of greed of movement of the verb, object or subject. *Shortest move* dictates that constituents should move to the first and relevant landing site from their source position. In support of this argument, Marantz (1995: 355) argues that “heads should be prohibited by Shortest move from skipping over any head position ‘between’, in the relevant sense, the position they start in and the targeted landing site”. *Greed*, on the other hand, is a constraint that postulates that a process affects an element so as to satisfy the requirement of that element. For instance, to check a verb feature, a verb needs to move to TNS and AGRs, not vice versa. Marantz clarifies this by arguing that the principle states that “a constituent may not move to satisfy the needs of the moving constituent; movement is motivated for selfish reasons, to satisfy the needs of the moving constituent”⁶ On its part, the principle of *procrastinate* delays movement until spell out. The principle thus prevents crashing of constructions by ensuring that such movements do not affect the PF.

Movement of element (24a) above, considering the economy principles mentioned above, will produce the structure (25) below:

25.



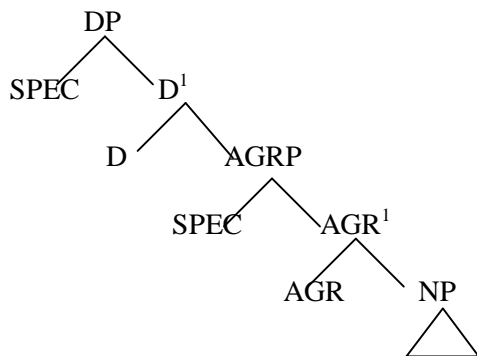
In the structure above, ‘*ebituma*’ settles at SPEC/AGRsP from SPEC/VP whereas ‘*embori*’ settles at SPEC/AGRoP from NP/A. These two are overt subject/object which move to check nominative and accusative cases respectively. The verb moves from V/v to AGRo/AGRo¹ to check its object agreement features and then to TNS/TNS¹ to check its tense features and at last settles at AGRs/AGRs¹ where it checks off its subject agreement features.

3.2 The Ekegusii DP Schema

For the purpose of this paper, an operational Ekegusii DP structure at least providing for the concord (agreement of elements) in the DP is generated building on the Abney (1987) suggestion on the parallel between the INFL and DP that sees the projection of the AGRP in the structure below.

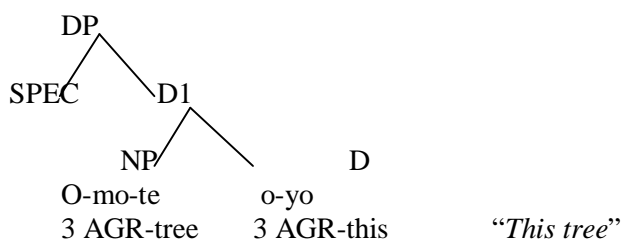
⁶ This is in Marantz’ article “The Minimalist program” in Webelhuth (1995) *Government and binding theory and the Minimalist program*. P.358.

26

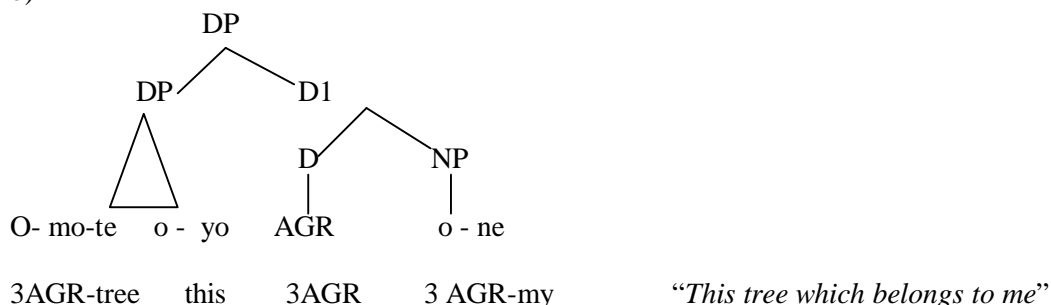


This DP structure is a further development of the Abney (1987) DP Hypothesis, from which the following phrase structures can be generated in Ekegusii.

27 a)



b)



In the above examples, (27a) is literally embedded in (27b). The above structures (27a & b) thus culminate into what this study considers the ‘ideal’ DP structure in (26). It is clear that the concordial agreement in the Ekegusii DP in class and number, whether it is between the noun complement and the demonstrative “oyo” or the possessive “one” with the already modified noun in the phase “omote oyo”, is indeed imbedded in the DP (cf. structure 26). In the tree diagrams, the NP turns out to be “projection of N dominated by a functional projection”⁷. The AGR under D accounts for the agreement that exists between the possessed ‘omote oyo’ and the possessive.

3.3 Schematic Relationship between the Ekegusii DP and Sentence

Taking the two minimalist structures (Ekegusii DP and sentence), a series of deductions can be made: 1) The DP and INFL of the sentence in Ekegusii are projections of functional categories from a lexical category, which is the NP for the DP and the VP for the sentence; 2) Both the DP and INFL of the sentence are projections of the N (NP) and V (VP) respectively; 3) From the Abney (1987) assumptions of the DP analysis, there is a parallel relationship that is drawn between the DP-NP at the DP level and the 1P⁸-VP at the sentence level; and 4) Agreement forms the core of the two functional phrases(that is DP and IP) for it features prominent in both. In the sentence, agreement of subject and object is crucial with the verb having to move to check these agreement features and tense features ahead of spell out.

⁷ This is a conclusion by Haegeman (1994:609) after analysis of the DP Hypothesis (Abney 1987).

⁸ The IP is later split in the Pollock (1989) Split -INFL hypothesis that is also later developed by Chomsky coming up with such functional categories as AGRsP, TNS and AGRoP out of the IP.

Similarly, in the DP, there is concordial agreement and the SPEC of AGRP is thus the site for possessives and other nominal modifiers. The number and quantifier phrases may also be generated in the DP as functional categories. This argument is supported by Ritter (1992) and Kaviti (2004) especially on the number phrase and Nyombe (2004) and Guisti (1992) who argue for a quantifier phrase (QP).

Other literature has attributed some properties to the DP. Grimshaw (1991) argues that the DP “is a perfect projection of N in a fashion parallel to that in which CP is a perfect projection of V”⁹. Szabolcsi (1992) also agrees to the claim that DP and CP perform “the function of saturating the predicate, namely turning a predicate (VP or NP) into an argument”¹⁰. In her analysis of the Chinese DP, though, Tang (1988) generates a k (classifier) phrase (KP)¹¹ in place of agreement phrase, she does come up with two major similarities: 1) both the sentence and DP contain two functional projections (that is CP-IP and DP-KP) and one lexical projection (that is NP and VP). The last projection is the lexical projection, and higher in the tree there are functional projections and 2) both the K and INFL heads contain lexical elements (for example numerals and modals), agreement and agreement-like elements (classifiers and AGR). Tang’s analysis predicts the bound nature of agreement features. She says that “at the sentence level, the bound morpheme AGR cannot occur alone and must be attached to some other element”¹². This implies that for the V to receive the AGR, it ought to be raised higher in the tree.

4.0 Conclusion

The paper provides an insight into the DP and the sentence in Ekegusii. It further draws parallels between the two with some more evidence in other related natural languages studied by other linguists across the world. A morpho-syntax of the Ekegusii sentence showing the overt movement of constituents in the derivation process is given. Chomsky’s principles of Economy at work are also highlighted in the study. The paper attests that full interpretation and feature checking are mutually essential principles in the morphosyntax of the Ekegusii DP and Sentence in ensuring that these constructions converge. The symmetry inferred in this paper is best captured through feature checking in the Ekegusii agreement system. In the sentence just like in the DP there is movement purely for checking purposes: abstract accusative and nominative case features are checked by noun movement and tense features are checked by verb movement in the sentence. Movement of elements is aimed at checking agreement between the noun and its determiners in the Ekegusii DP. In addition, subject and object agreement features (number case and person) are also checked in the process before spell out.

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⁹ This is in an article by Guisti (1992) *Heads and Modifiers among Determiners, Evidence from Romanian and German. Working Papers in Linguistics*. 3. CLI p.12.

¹⁰ DP and CP are extended projections of the NP and VP respectively.

¹¹ The KP in the Chinese DP functions like the AGRP and other functional phrases.

¹² From Tang (1988) “A Note on the DP Analysis of the Chinese Noun Phrase’ P.345.

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Table 1: Ekegusii Noun Classes

Class	Nominal Prefixes and Examples					
	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Example</i>	<i>Gloss</i>	<i>Plural</i>	<i>Example</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
½	o-mo-	Omonto	person	a – ba	Abanto	people
¾	o-mo -	Omote	Tree	e – me -	Emete	trees
5/6	(e) – ri -	Rioga	flower	a-ma-	Amaoga	flowers
7/8	e-ge-	Egesusu	rabbit	e-Bi-	Ebisusu	Rabbits
9/10	e -	Endo	Lion	ci	Cindo	lions
11/10	o-ro-	Orobago	fence	ci-	Cimbago	fences
12/8	a – ka -	Akamosi	Boy	e – bi	Ebimoisi	boys
14/6	o – Bo	obongo obong'iti	brain selfishness	a – ma -	Amaongo	brains
15/6	o – ko -	okogoro	leg	a – ma	Amagoro	legs
16	aa -	aaiga	Place(here)			
17	-me-	nyombaime	Place(inside the house)			

Table 2: Ekegusii Demonstratives

Type of demonstrate	Meaning
1. <u>Proximal</u> <i>Singular</i> This <i>Plural</i> These	(Near to both the speaker and hearer)
2. <u>Distal</u> <i>Singular</i> That That' <i>Plural</i> Those Those'	Far from the speaker and hearer Far from the speaker but near the hearer

Table 3: The Concordial Prefix Attached to Ekegusii Demonstrative

Noun class	Demonstratives					
	<i>This</i>	<i>These</i>	<i>That</i>	<i>Those</i>	<i>That'</i>	<i>Those</i>
O-mo-/aba	o-yo	a-ba	a-ria	Ba-ria	o-uio	a-buo
Omo - / eme-	o-yo	e-ye	o-ria	e-ria	o-yio	e-yio
(e) – ri - / ama	e-ri	a-ya	Ri-ira	a-ria	e-rio	a-yio
E-re-/bi-	e-ke	e-Bi	Ke-ria	Bi-ria	Ekio	e-bio
E - /- ci	e-ye	e-ci	e-ria	ci-ria	e-yio	e-cio
-oro-/ci	o-ro	e-ci	Ro-ria	ci-ria	o-ruo	e-cio
A-ka-/e-bi-	a-ka	e-Bi	Ka-ria	Bi-ira	a-kuo	e-Bio
A-bo-/a-ma	o-Bo	a-ya	Bo-ria	a-ria	a-buo	e-yio
O-ko-/a-ma	o-ko	a-ya	Ko-ria	a-ria	o-ku	a-yio
Aa-	Aa	Aa	a-ria	-	Abuo	a-yio
-me	-		-	-	-	

Table 4: Ekegusii Possessive Pronouns

Person	Number			
	<i>singular</i>	<i>gloss</i>	<i>plural</i>	<i>gloss</i>
1 ST	-ne	'my'	-ito	'our'
2 ND	-o	'your'	-no	'your'
3 RD	-je	'his/her'	-Bo	'their'

Table 5: Possessive Prepositions with Genitive NPs

Noun class	Preposition	
	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Omo-/aba	o-/bwo	Ba
Omo-/eme	o-/bwo	ja
(E) – ri / a-ma-	Ria	A
E-re-/a-ma-	Kia	Bia
E-/ci	Ya	Cia
O-ro./ci	Rwa	Cia
A-ka-/eBi	Ka	Bia
O - Bo -/ama-	Bwa	A
O - ko/a – ma	Kwa	A
Aa-	A	A
-me	-	-

Table 6: Agreement Prefixes in Quantifiers

Noun Class	Nominal Prefix <i>Sing. / Plu</i>	Quantifier			
		-onsi <i>all</i>	-nini <i>Few</i>	-nge <i>many</i>	-ke <i>some</i>
½	Omo- / aba -	B-onsi	Ba-si – nini	Aba-nge	Ba-ke
¾	Omo - /eme -	y – onsi	Me-si- nini	e-menye	Me-be
5/6	(e) ri - /ama	Onsi	Ma-si- nini	Ama-me	Ma-ke
7/8	Ere-/ebi-	Bi-onsi	Bi-si-nini	eBi-nge	Bi - ke
9/10	e-/ci-	Bi-onsi	ci-si-nini	Cini-nge	n-ke
11/10	oro-/ci-	ci-onsi	ci-si-nini	Cini-nge	n-ke
12/8	aka-/ama-	ci-onsi	Bi - si - nini	Ebi - nge	Bi-ke
14/6	Obo-/ama	Bi-onsi	Ma-si-nini	Ama-nge	Ma-ke
15/6	oka-/ ama -	Onsi	Ma-si-nini	Ama-nge	Ma-ke
16	aa-	Onsi	a-si-nini	a-ninge	a-ke
17	-me	-			