A "reflexive benefactive" in Chamba-Daka (Adamawa branch, Niger-Congo family)

1. Introduction

Chamba-Daka (CD) is a peripheral member of the Adamawa branch of Niger-Congo. Various dialects of this language are spoken by between 100,000 and 200,000 people in Adamawa and Taraba States in northeastern Nigeria. This paper concerns the lingua franca dialect called Nnakennyaare[1] (from *n nàk ɛ́ nyaarɛ̀?* 2SG | do | M | how:Q[2], 'how are you doing? how are you?', a common greeting).

The purpose of this paper is to describe and define a pronominal usage current in CD, which I call "reflexive benefactive" (RB). The notion of benefactivity as characterizing a semantic argument can, of course, be conceived in more than one way. It can be taken very narrowly as contrasting with receptivity, the latter always associated with an argument of a particular class of verbs containing 'give'. Again, it can be taken as an umbrella term covering both receptivity and various other forms of affectedness, and will then be recognizable by association with the verb 'give'. There is at least one more way of understanding benefactivity, namely, as an additional property assigned to an argument with another semantic role in the utterance, expressing the attribution of benefit or detriment to that argument in that role in the predicative context. This is the sense used for the RB.

In CD, benefactivity as an additional property can only be assigned to a grammatical subject whose semantic role need may vary but will be neither patient nor beneficiary. The formal mark of this property is a pronominal copy of the subject. The semantics of benefactivity in this use is much more difficult to define than in the case of benefactive arguments in the other two senses. This is unavoidable, as the nature of the semantic roles of arguments is to a large extent induced by the governing predicative term, usually a verb. Benefactivity as an additional feature of another role is not defined by the predicate, but depends greatly on pragmatic factors. This leads to senses which may be extremely hard to capture in translation, and may be only hinted at or not attempted at all for some examples given below, particularly since any translation will be out of context[3]. Indeed, context alone clarifies the utterance features chosen to render the desired nuances in translation. A few characteristic kinds of contrast are cited in 3.2.5 below, but elsewhere, the reader must accept or assume the benefactive sense. A discussion of the full range of senses would require much more space than is available here, and doubtless also require much more knowledge than we currently possess. It remains to be decided whether this type of benefactivity should be grouped together with middle verbs in a category different from that of primary benefactive arguments.

---

[2] A list of the abbreviations used in word-by-word glosses appears at the end of this paper.

[3] Actually, the nature of the benefactivity in some of these utterances might not be transparent even to other native speakers and would require interrogation of the original speaker to obtain a valid explanation, often a task with uncertain results in a primarily oral culture.

2. The semantic structure of verbal utterances

The canonical CD affirmative verbal utterance contains a verb in the "absolute" (i.e., lexical) form with no TAM specification whatsoever.

(1) *í kèè gəən tím buu, (í saam sɔ́)*
    3PL seek medicine tree PL   3PL find:NEG NEG

'they are looking/looked for a remedy (and they can't/didn't find one)'

The canonical order is SVO as in (1), and there must be a subject unless the referent is a known third person/thing, in which case S is ø. Animate subjects of all other persons must be marked by a subject index directly preposed to the verb. Only third-person inanimate nominal subjects are not followed by a subject index.

2.1. Transitive verbs

The category of transitive verbs is defined by the canonical possibility (i.e., the logical structural possibility) of taking three direct (unmarked) objects, hence SVOOO[4]. These objects are syntactically direct, i.e., they are unmarked nonsubject arguments; but each has a distinct semantic role which is associated with relative position in the utterance. In the first object position stands the benefactive object (BO); in the second, the patient object (PO); and in the third, the object I have called "relational" (RO). This last object designates that "with respect to which" the process takes place.

The semantic role of the BO, we may remark that its semantic role may be either that of beneficiary or that of recipient stricto sensu[5]. Thus, (2a) is constructed in the same way as (2b):

(2a) *waakù   túm*
     cook:3SG$_{BO}$ food$_{PO}$

'[he/she] cooked staple food *for* him/her'

(2b) *nyaakù   túm*
     give:3SG$_{BO}$ food$_{PO}$

---

[4] This triple-object construction opens up the possibility of utterances comparable to those obtained by using double-object verbs in the applicative in (some) Bantu languages, see Van Valin (1993:71). The ordering will, however, be such that the first object in those languages will be the last in CD. An alternative interpretation of the Bantu data might allow that the second and third (recipient and patient) objects are in fact fused into a single patient-object noun phrase so that the number of objects is in fact no more than two. Whatever the case, CD is typologically removed from such languages, as there is no diathesis, i.e., no utterance containing the arguments of a corresponding utterance with a transitive verb and having the PO of the latter as S. Their main point of convergence is the formal identity of beneficiary and recipient (see below).

[5] This identification of roles is no more than an extension of the preexisting complexity of the notion of "recipient" which is already manifest in the diversity of uses of the verb "give" This verb is assumed to take an agent, a patient, and a (usually) animate locative recipient as arguments. Nevertheless, it is hard to equate the roles of "book" and "work" in "give someone a book to read" and "give someone a job to do", or to accept that "giving someone an accolade" is like "giving someone a chance", and that one "gives someone sympathy" in the same way one "gives someone trouble". There are even problems associated with equating the roles in "give something a coat of paint" and "give someone a look of dismay". Indeed, it is difficult to fit all these examples into a single "logical structure" based, for example, on {cause{become{be with}}}; at least a second sense involving {cause{become{be Manner}}}(i.e., be somehow, be in a situation) would be useful.

'[he/she] gave staple food ***to*** him/her'[6]

In the most general semantic terms, the BO is the participant who is affected or concerned by the process without undergoing it. There would seem to be a strict complementary distribution of the animacy feature between the animate BO and the inanimate RO. It could thus conceivably be argued that this is the sole semantic distinction required and that in CD the two are otherwise semantically identical, whereby the RO would be "inanimate argument which is affected or concerned by the process without undergoing it". If it were not for this possible complementary distribution (requiring confirmation from a much larger corpus) and the role of the RO with intransitive verbs, the latter might be treated as a peripheral argument or semantic adjunct (cf. Zúñiga 2008).

There is no term that can be used to head a circumstantial phrase meaning 'for, on behalf of' (or 'against, to the detriment of') an animate being[7]. The beneficiary can only be expressed as the BO of a verb.

CD nevertheless has a way of introducing a beneficiary/recipient contrast with certain basic verbs through use of a circumstantial phrase where the semantic recipient is the governed term while the BO remains the semantic beneficiary. It may therefore be assumed that the semantic role of beneficiary is the primary one for the BO. Consider proposition (3) with nominal BO and PO:

(3) *àán nyáá mó-/nyέὲm bè-wéé déὲn yísí έ sá*
DEM give past   sibling   DEM$_{BO}$ cloth$_{PO}$ M tag
'but she gave that sister of hers a cloth once, didn't she?'

Such propositions with two nominal objects are comparatively infrequent. More often, one will be deleted of the patient object. In (4), a sequence of propositions allows deletion of the PO:

(4) *kùù pέnì gà, bà téé bà nyáá míí déὲn*
blow thing TOP, AUX take AUX give child DEM

'after playing the [flute], he takes (it) and gives (it) to the child'

Context may also allow deletion of the beneficiary:

(5) *nwúù bέεp gà, í nyáá kpàà kúm-/kə́rə́rə́...*
wife money TOP, 3PL give chicken ten

'as brideprice they give [the parents] ten chickens...'

In some cases, both objects may be deleted as in the second proposition in (6):

(6) *í nyáá pέn-láám bèè bu gáà gàà gɔ́ng,*
3PL give thing-duty 3PL PL LOC across other,
'they give one set of duties over there,

---

[6] CD removes the recipient/beneficiary from governance by locative heads:
    (1) *à sòòm bɛnàan jum*
         FUT disease bring:2SG on
         'it will bring illness upon you'
[7] Cause or motivation may be expressed by *dìm* 'behind' which governs an inanimate complement : *dìm géεn tíi*, behind | 3INAN | head, 'because of that, on account of that'.

wɔ́ɔ́ bóó, rá nyáá rɛ̀ bɛn gɔ́ng
1PL TOP, 1PL give LOC ground other

while we here give another'

It is also possible to avoid reference to a beneficiary while expressing a recipient as the complement of the polysemic head *wàà*, broadly translated as 'with', which in this case may be said to express "possession" ('be with, have').

(7) *í   nyáá lɛ́ɛ́rá míí wàà máàrɛ̀?*
    3PL give flute small with who-Q?

  'whom did they give the little flute to (to keep and use)?'

It is, however, equally possible to retain the beneficiary object and at the same time to specify that the beneficiary is precisely a recipient and possessor:

(8) *n   nyáá mɛ́ɛ́m bu ɛ́ wàà sin sáng*
    2SG give children PL M with just again

  'you just give [it] over finally to the young people (to guard and take care of)'

By conflating these structures, the speaker can specify the first object as beneficiary and a different oblique one as recipient and possessor:

(9) *í   nyaarà pén-liin wàà dá/á wèè*
    3PL give-2SG food with father 2SG

  'they give food for you to your father (to keep for you until you can eat it)'

Examples (2-9) illustrate various constructions allowed with the verb *nyáá* 'give', which entails the beneficiary/recipient contrast. If we now turn to the verb *gààn* 'get, receive', we will find that identical structures are used to allow the beneficiary to be contrasted with the source, again governed by *wàà*. In (10), we see a proposition corresponding to (2a) except that the semantic role of the "beneficiary" is rather that of origin and consequently of maleficiary:

(10) *nɛ̀-ràán   ganúm pén bɛ́ɛ̀ gíin*
    person-DEM get-LOGSG thing M-with thus

  '(said,) That fellow got something off me like that'

We may pass over instances of object omission and consider directly an utterance corresponding to (7):

(11) *à   bà à   gààn gəən é wàà nɛ̀-ràán*
    2SG AUX 2SG get medicine M with person-DEM

  'go get medicine from that fellow'

Identical syntactic expansions lead us to an utterance with the full set of three non-subject arguments as in (9), where the BO is now again the semantic beneficiary:

(12) *í   ganá sɔ́ɔ́ bɛ́ɛnɛ́ wàà Nɛ̀sáárá buu*
    3PL get:1PL earth M with White PL

  'they got our country for us out of the hands of the white people'

This ability to add an argument by use of *wàà* is restricted. Unlike *gààn*, a verb such as *gùt* 'catch, seize', for example, uses *wàà* "reflexively". Indeed, *gùt wàà* means 'seize and keep *for oneself*', i.e., 'hold'. Thus,

(13) *í   bè   sɔɔmɛn nè-wɔpsá vèè bàán   àán*
3PL CSQ choose   person-big 3PL PL-DEM DEM

 'then they would elect those of their elders

í   ma gutbɔɔn   sɔ́ɔ́ déèn wàà ràán àn
3PL FUT catch-3PL:INF earth DEM with DEM DEM

 who would take over the (running of the) country for them'

where the elders (elected officials), subject of the relative clause in (13), are also the "recipients" (the seizers) of the country (compare 8). If there is a source, it must be identical with the beneficiary.

2.1.1. Ambiguities arising from object-argument saturation

In practice, utterances with a sequence of three *direct* nominal objects are extremely rare. In the strictest sense, not one canonical utterance of this type is attested in the present corpus. There are, however, a few non-canonical examples, such as (14):

(14) *í   mà Ù. nwúù nɔ́t   pakɛn   tíi*
3PL FUT U. wife$_{BO}$ bag$_{PO}$ put in:INF head$_{RO}$

 'they put a bag on the U.'s wife's head'

Here the verb form is the "future" using a conjugated auxiliary verb and an infinitive. In such utterances the order may be, as in (14),

$$S \ V \ O_{BO} \ O_{PO} \ VN \ O_{RO}$$

though the transposition of the BO and PO is not obligatory. The reason why the transposed structure is in fact preferred for (14) can be deduced from simple inspection. *Ùsùmanù nwúù* means 'Usman's wife', i.e., "genitive" (associatice) constructions[8] are of the form

Modifying Noun : Modified Noun

Likewise, "descriptive" constructions, say *nwúù pási* 'new wife', are of the form

Modified Noun : Modifying Noun

There is thus no overt marking to indicate which type of construction is intended; pragmatic factors alone determine the interpretation. Hence, the postpostion of three nominal objects would give rise, in many (perhaps most) contexts, to considerable indeterminacy of interpretation regarding whether each noun should be taken as an object in itself or construed as part of an object noun phrase and, in the latter case, which should be Modified and Modifying in a given phrase. The indeterminacy would increase proportionally if one or more objects were themselves phrases with two or more constituents, e.g.:

---

[8] In an earlier paper (Boyd 2004), I used the expression "correlational construction".

(15) *dá/á kèè wùù yìsá-mum tíi*
  father 3SG room entry head

  'top of the gateway to his father's house' (lit. 'head of gateway of house of his father')

Transposition therefore isolates the RO from the phrase comprised of the BO and the PO. It will be remarked that, already in (15), there is indeterminacy regarding whether the sense should be the actually intended one: 'put {for wife of Usman}$_{BO}$ bag$_{PO}$ {with respect to head}$_{RO}$' with three objects, or rather 'put [on themselves]$_{BO}$ {bag of wife of Usman}$_{PO}$ {with respect to head}$_{RO}$' with elliptical beneficiary object. As always, indeterminacy is lifted pragmatically by reference to context alone[9].

Pronominalization of an O can also help to distinguish object-noun phrases from object sequences. For example, with respect to

(16) *í dɔ́ɔ́m gàng láam*
  3PL greet chief sleep

  'they greet the chief (for the first time in the day)'

the pronominalization in (17a) shows that *gàng láam* is not a single noun phrase ('sleep of chief') but rather two separate objects:

(17a) *í dɔmkù láam*
  3PL greet:3SG$_{BO}$ sleep$_{PO}$

  'they greet him'

but not

(17b) *í dɔ́ɔ́m lá/ám kèè*[10]
  3PL greet sleep 3SGPOS

Nevertheless, this "test" is not foolproof. Indeed, we are dealing here with a set phrase: *dɔ́ɔ́m láam*[11], which has only one interpretation. In another utterance such as

(18) *ˊn kɔ́bɛn méɛ́m bu déɛ̀n wɔ́k /ɛ́ɛn*
  3PL draw:FOC children PL DEM water M

  'they are the ones who go and fetch ***water for the children***'

both pronominalizations are possible:

(19a) *ˊn kɔbɔ́/ɔ́n wɔ́ki*
  3PL draw:3PL$_{BO}$:FOC water$_{PO}$:EXT

  'they$_i$ are the ones who fetch ***water for them$_j$***'

---

[9] In view of the high degree of indeterminacy brought about by the absence of functional markers, the student of CD will find the interpretation of even the most ordinary conversation more than usually difficult without the assistance of a person who knows what the participants are talking about. This certainly makes CD a "cool" language (Huang 1984 as cited by Tsuboi, 2010) in a very general sense.

[10] There is a conceivable use for an utterance of this kind. One could say, speaking of a person whose friend was celebrating his birthday,

  (2)   *dɔmkù lá/ám kèén*
     greet-3SG sleep 3SGPOS.INAN
     'he greeted him for it [the occasion]'

[11] There will be a discussion below (see 2.6) of which role should be attributed to *láam* 'sleep' in this expression.

and

(19b) ´n kɔ́bɛn wɔ́k   /bèè
      3PL fetch   water$_{PO}$ 3PLPOS

‘they$_i$ are the ones who fetch ***their$_j$ water***[12]’

Reference to context alone gives the desired interpretation. In this case, confirmation for the interpretation represented by (19a) comes from the pronominalization found in the sentence which follows (18) in discourse:

(20) í   bà   ´n wəsí/bú wuu   kaa
    3PL AUX 3PL pour:3PL$_{BO}$ within:LOC hut_sp.

‘they pour (it) out ***for them*** in the circumcision hut’

This is a common discursive strategy: follow an utterance presenting nominal arguments with another utterance pronominalizing these arguments in a way which will show their intended function in the preceding one.

2.1.2. Rules for pronominalization of objects

Of the three possible objects, one and only one may be pronominal rather than nominal. This pronominal is enclitic to the verb, and the word order constraints remain[13]. In other words, if the BO is pronominalized, it may be followed by two nominal objects (PO and RO). If, however, the PO is pronominalized, there can be no BO and any following object is necessarily the RO. If the RO were to be pronominalized (there are no attested cases of this and, if the RO must indeed be inanimate, it is presumably impossible), there would be no following object.

In the general case, an inanimate PO may only be “pronominalized” as ø (see already the parenthesized proposition in 1). This is also true when there is a pronominalized BO as in (21-23), compare (4).

(21) í   bɛnì nyìín yáà, í   tangbú dìm, ´n gèt nyìín tɛɛ
    3PL bring now   leaf$_{PO}$ 3PL tie:3PL$_{BO}$ back 3PL go   now   DUR

‘they$_i$ bring leaves$_j$ and tie [them$_j$] around them$_k$, then they$_k$ go on their way’

(22) í   jangkù   gəən   wók /àn i   kpàán,
    3PL throw:3SG$_{BO}$ medicine water$_{PO}$ DEM LOC penis

‘they apply the medicine to his penis,

í   jangkù   biin i   kpàán
    3PL throw:**3SG$_{BO}$**   front LOC penis

they apply [it] to his penis’

(23) jup tuu   ma yisíbɔ́ɔn   nòòní nòòní
    cult owner FUT show:**3PL$_{BO}$**:INF one   one

---

[12] The difference in 3PL reference is not obligatory. The sense could also be ‘they fetched their (own) water’. In (19a), however, there *must* be two (sets of) referents.

[13] This is true of the canonical utterance. In the future form, however, the pronominal is suffixed to the infinitive. If the pronominal is BO and a nominal PO is shifted to preinfinitival position, the latter will then, strictly speaking, precede the former.

'the owner of the cult object shows [it] to them individually'

If there is no animate object, an inanimate PO may be pronominalized by a third person pronoun, perhaps with a certain emphatic semantic charge, as in the final term in (25):

(24) *í   vít géɛn*[14] *ˊn nóó, fàríllà, lɔ́ɔ́rí-lɔ́ɔ́rí,*
     3PL call 3INAN   3PL say   obligation obligatoriness

    'this is what is called obligation (*farilla* in Hausa, *lɔ́ɔ́rí-lɔ́ɔ́rí* in Chamba),

    pɔkà   kóó   n   wɔ̀ɔ̀rì   kóó   n   kɔ́ɔ́rì,   a   à   tɛ   nakkɔ̀ɔn
    stay:2SG or   2SG want:EXT   or   2SG refuse:EXT   2SG FUT DUR do:3SG$_{PO}$:INF

    whether you like it or not, it is required and you must do **it**'

In the canonical case, the BO is animate. There is even a good case to be made that the BO *must* be animate. If so, (25) shows pronominalization of an inanimate PO in the absence of a BO and in the presence of a RO.

(25) *í   mà duu dá/án baré/én wú/ú kèén   tɛɛ,*
     3PL FUT pot$_{PO}$ DEM   draw:INF   body$_{RO}$ 3SGPOS:INAN DUR

    'they will paint the outside of the pot all over

    í   mà biikɔ̀ɔn   tí/í[15] *kèén   ì   kîingkíing*
    3PL FUT close:3SG$_{PO}$:INF head$_{RO}$ 3SGPOS:INAN with tree_sp.

    and they will stop **it** (lit. stop it up with respect to its top) with fruit from the *kîingkíing* tree'

On occasion, when the BO and the PO are known, they may both be "pronominalized" by ø (compare 6):

(26) *bà   nyaakù nyésà, nyáá nyáá*[16] *pàk   pirìkùrì*
     AUX give:3SG breast   give   give   put_in put_back:3SG:REAL

    '[she] suckled it [= the child] for a long time and (then) put it back in [the hole]'

(27) *kú   nyɛ́m   kpásèn, í   mà míí wɔ̀p   nyaan gà, nyaa sɔ́*
     2/3SG give:LOGSG spoon   LOGSG FUT child porridge give:INF TOP give NEG

    '[she$_i$ said,] Give me$_i$ a spoon, I$_i$'m going to give my$_i$ child some porridge, but [then she$_j$] didn't give (it to her$_i$)'

2.2. Intransitive verbs

The "intransitive" verb category is defined by the ability to take at most two objects, which are necessarily BO and RO excluding a PO. A third category of verbs is made up of intransitives derived by suffixation. These derivates, which I call "resultatives", can take no more than one

---

[14] This is pronominalization by the independent (nominal) form of the pronoun, which need not be discussed further here.
[15] The use of body-part terminology does not necessarily imply personification of the PO, hence interpretation as BO. There are no separate terms to designate the main part or the extremities of things (the 'bottom' of something, for example, is *kììn* 'buttocks').
[16] This example may be questioned on the grounds that the reduplicated emphatic form is defined by the fact that it does not take objects or that the PO of the final verb is equally the BO of *nyáá* 'give'.

inanimate direct object, the RO[17]. Thus, *dakì* 'clean' (28a) > resultative *dakèn* 'be/grow clean, bright, light' (28b). It is, however, sometimes possible to revert from the derived verb to an intransitive use of the source verb in order to use a BO, as in (28c).

(28a) *í   suksí í   dakí/bú mérí jé wéréré*
     3PL wash 3PL clean:3PL$_{BO}$ sore$_{PO}$ just brightly

    'they$_i$ wash their$_j$ wound perfectly clean'

(28b) *bùm bà dakèn bɛn*
     place AUX be clean down

    'then the place became light (= morning came)'

(28c) *bùm kú   dakùm   nàà gɔ̀ngsí pɛ̀*
     place 3SG:INJ clean:1SG$_{BO}$ in breath also

    'let the place become light for me in life (= may morning find me still alive)'

The peculiar semantic role of the RO is well illustrated by the resultative derivates. See for example derivational pairs like transitive *jùp* 'uproot (something)', intransitive *jubèn* 'be uprooted'; or transitive *kamì* 'gather (things) together', intranstive *kamèn* 'be gathered together'. Uses of the derivates with RO are, e.g., *jubèn yípsúm* 'be uprooted with respect to running, i.e., run quickly away' or *kamèn tíí* 'be gathered with respect to the head, i.e., be joined together in a common project'.

There are also resultative derivates of the pluractional and causative forms which can take on reciprocal meaning in context, thus *nyíí* 'know', *nyiikì* 'know (many people or things)', *nyiikèn* 'be known (said of many things)' or 'know, recognize one another', where the reciprocal sense is by far the most common usage. Cf. (29) where *gankèn* is used in the future with a reciprocal sense 'get mutually, with respect to each other' and no direct object.

(29) *nè-dɔn   gààn wá/á míìn bè, nè-dɔn   gààn*
    person-other get hand left GNR person-other get

    'one of them will get the left leg (of the animal) and the other,

    wá/á lúùm bè, í   mà gankénɛn gáà bɛn
    hand male GNR 3PL FUT get:INF   LOC down

    the right one; they settle right off which of them gets what'

It is however equally possible to use the reciprocal with an object which must be treated syntactically as relational, even though it might be the patient argument of the base verb, cf. *kèè* 'rip, tear', *keekì* 'tear (many things)', *keekèn yísí* 'tear cloth for each other, i.e., tear each other's clothes, as when fighting'[18].

---

[17] This use of the term "intransitive" may initially seem strange; nevertheless, it is easy to see that the transitive/intransitive contrast in CD rests solely on the presence (transitive) or absence (intransitive) of a PO. This corresponds to the ordinary sense of this contrast. The peculiarities in CD are that both the BO and the PO are direct (i.e., unmarked), and that there can be a third nonoblique object. There is no principled reason why any verb should not take its full number of direct objects, although pragmatics determine that most do not or do so only rarely. Hence, there is no good reason to speak of ditransitive or even tritransitive verbs as if these were grammatical categories.

[18] This type of object seems to have received little attention in the literature. It is nevertheless more widely present in the region. Bata, a language of the Central Chadic branch of Afroasiatic, has a semantically comparable object, used with a verb form which precludes a direct object. In this case, there is an overt marker for the relational object, which is not restricted to inanimacy as it apparently is in CD.

2.3. Nil-, single-, double- and triple-object verbs

2.3.1. Minimal nil-object valency

The canonical structure suggested above for intransitive verbs is

S V BO RO

The simple inspection of a textual corpus will nevertheless show that intransitive verbs are frequently used with no objects: subject arguments are allowed to run, stand, be/get drunk, and so on without doing so either to the benefit (or detriment) of another party or with respect to some position, manner, or aspect. We may describe this structure as

S V X X

where X is an absent argument. These verbs must count as nil-object verbs taking a BO and/or RO as expansions.

2.3.2. Minimal single-object valency

We have given as "canonical" for transitive verbs the structure:

S V BO PO RO

Nevertheless, a semantic characterization of the verb stock quickly reveals that many verbs require nothing in the BO and RO slots. Indeed, one can "beat the drum" or "eat the mango" without doing so either to the benefit (or detriment) of a third party or with respect to some position, manner, or aspect. We may describe this structure as

S V X PO X > S V-Pn X (with pronominal animate PO)
or S V X ø X (when the inanimate PO is known).

A consideration of the most frequently used verbs of this kind shows, however, that they generally have a nil-object usage. Let us take, for example, *tə́p* 'put (something somewhere)', which has the usage represented by

(30) *màna nè-wòpsá bu ˊn nyə́ə́n ˊn tə́bì*
people person-big PL 3PL see 3PL put:REAL

'the ancients were observant and took note [of what they saw]'

(31) *á təp só, á nóó, pə́n àán Sú/ú ma təbɛn ə́ɛn,*
1PL put NEG 1PL say thing DEM God FUT put:INF M

'we didn't realize that it was God's will

mà ba gapsá/án ì gɔ́ɔn sɔ́
FUT AUX divide:1PL:INF with 3SGIDP NEG

to separate us'

This use of *tə́p* to mean 'believe, realize, notice, expect' is clearly related to a single-object usage, *tə́p (PO) kàà*, put | PO | as, 'appoint (someone) as, consider (someone) as', but is nevertheless an independent usage of a nil-object type. It is therefore impossible to affirm that such verbs require at

least one object. It is nevertheless likely − although this is not theoretically necessary − that, if these verbs take an object, it must be interpreted as a PO and not as a RO with respect to a nil-object verb. These verbs might be called nil/single-object bivalent with BO and RO as expansions.

2.3.3. Minimal double-object valency

Some verbs, however, often seem to require both BO and PO, though not RO. These include the usual cases: 'give', 'bring', etc. Nevertheless, closer inspection shows that these verbs behave on occasion like S V X O X verbs, cf.

(32) *nὲ-dɔn   gà, gáám mum sànglέn έn,*
person-other TOP speak   speech rude   THAT

'Some uncouth person may say,

Mamsà déὲn gà, bɛní nyáa, nyáá nyáa?
Mamser   DEM   TOP bring what   give   what

What does MAMSER [a government-sponsored development program of the 1990's] bring, what does it give?' (i.e., what good is it?)

The sense is obviously 'what good is it *to anyone*?' but it is not clear that the indefinite universal quantifier is elliptical (i.e., ø) in this utterance. Compare

(33) *míí kèè   bírúm   ba gbɔɔm   àán gà,*
child 3SGPOS naked(ness) AUX grow_large DEM TOP

'since his little child was now grown,

í   nɔ́ɔ́, kú béní   súún
3PL say   2/3SG bring:INJ husband

they said, Find a husband'

While the sense is clearly 'find *her* a husband', the usage suggests that people are asking the father to undertake the husband-seeking process without concern for the identity of the young woman to be married.

These examples suggest that the PO alone must be considered obligatory for these verbs. They are single-/double-object bivalent with RO as an expansion[19].

2.3.4. Minimal triple-object valency

No "triple-object" verbs (in the sense of verbs which normally have all three objects) are found. Indeed, the relational object is relatively rare with transitive verbs and seems always to be *optional*. There are likewise no attestations of S V ø ø O (with known BO and PO). Hence, a primary characteristic of transitive verbs is that their RO is *always* in some sense an expansion of a simpler construction.

---

[19] The possibility of true obligatory double-object verbs will be considered below in 2.6.

2.4. Expansions

Transitivity is defined for CD as inherent patient-object valency; intransitivity, as absence of this valency. For both kinds of verbs, beneficiary and relational objects are expansions. Let us now return to nil-object verbs which can take BO and/or RO expansions. An instructive example is *làà* 'stay, remain'. Ordinary S V X X usages with and without locative complements are:

(34) *í   làà rɛ   Yoolà dɛ́ɛ̀n háá*
    3PL stay LOC town DEM until

    'they stayed long in Yola

(35) *`n  làà  `n kɛ̀ɛ̀ nyá/árɛ̀?*
    1SG stay 1SG seek what:Q

    what am I staying around for?'

Yet an optional BO can be found with this verb (cf. 24 for a comparable usage with *pɔ̀k*):

(36) *àán pɛ́n àán laàm   àán*
    DEM thing DEM stay:1SG$_{BO}$ DEM

    'that is the thing that remains for me (to do)'

There are also various expressions in which the same verb takes an object which is sematically relational rather than a beneficiary: *làà súún yàà*, stay | husband | compound, 'be a married woman', *làà gàng*, stay | chief, 'be chief, occupy the chiefship', etc. Hence, with both BO and RO:

(37) *laabú   gàng*
    stay:3PL$_{BO}$ chief$_{RO}$

    'he ruled as their chief '

There is, however, another important and problematic usage of *làà*, viz., *làà láam* '(to) sleep', where it has only its "internal object"[20] *láam* 'sleep' as an argument. A priori, it would seem better *làà* still be considered intransitive with *láam* as its relational object. Some support for this choice might be gained from examples such as:

(38) *làà tunsì   púrùm láam*
    stay send_out fatigue sleep

    'he slept to get rid of his fatigue, he refreshed himself by sleeping' (lit. 'he lay and removed fatigue with respect to sleep')

Here *láam* can easily be construed as RO to both *làà* and *tunsì púrùm*. At the same time, *làà {púrùm láam}* 'fall asleep from fatigue' is also a valid expression, another classic case of ambiguity arising from the juxtaposition of two nominals outside S position[21].

    While (37) 'be chief for them' is quite natural and provides a good prima facie example of

---

[20] This is the nominal associated with (often irregularly derived from) the verb root. In languages in this region, the verb may be used with its internal object to express a specific "unitary" sense as in this case.

[21] This example is furthermore illustrative of the CD tendency to use what I call "portmanteau utterances": the conjoining of putatively independent propositions in a single utterance, at the opposite extreme from the analytical phenomena observed in languages using verb serialization of the type "take thing give someone".

an intransitive verb taking both BO and RO, the native speaker strongly resists expanding *làà láam* by adding a BO to obtain an utterance such as **laakù láam* 'he slept for him'. This resistance might, however, be attributed rather to semantic strangeness and uselessness than to strict agrammaticality. But there is still another analytical possibility available, viz., that some non-derived verbs are such that they take a single obligatory object which saturates the object structure. These verbs form utterances with the structure:

S V O

where O is an object with no contrastive semantic value (unlike resultative verbs, which are assumed to be intransitive and take a RO but no BO). The PO/RO contrast would become inapplicable in this case as would, in consequence, the categorization of the verb as transitive or intransitive.

2.5. A consideration of the saturator-object interpretation

If this interpretation were to be adopted, other verbs which resemble internal object constructions in taking a very limited range of objects could be categorized in the same way. Thus, *jùt* 'bathe, take a bath' which requires an object denoting a liquid, usually *wɔ́ɔk* 'water' but sometimes, for example, things such as *gəən tím*, medicine | tree, 'herbal decoction'. This verb behaves exactly like *làà* in not taking a beneficiary (what would 'taking a bath to someone else's benefit or detriment' exactly imply?), but differs from *làà* in *never* appearing (outside the reduplicative construction) without an object. For this reason, it is impossible to demonstrate any original intransitivity.

This categorization nevertheless faces a major obstacle with examples such as:

(39) *a   à   wɔ́k /jurɛn wú/ú wèè   jé pát*
     2SG FUT water wash:INF body 2SGPos just all

    'you must wash your whole body'

Here *wú/ú wèè* 'your body' seems clearly to stand as RO, so that *wɔ́ɔk* 'water' as inanimate must be the PO (barring the possibility of two ROs), and *jùt* 'bathe' is therefore transitive[22].

Hence, it must be assumed that there is a both category of obligatory single-object verbs which are used exclusively with a specific inanimate object, and a category of transitive verbs which are used only with a semantically limited range of objects. The former are originally intransitive, like *làà* 'stay' and have a specific sense when used with their "default object". They share with the latter and with resultatives the property of inability to take a BO.

The question now is, Are there verbs with ordinary transitive usages which exclude a BO when they take an internal or semantically restricted object? There are quite a few transitive verbs taking any one or more of the three canonical objects, e.g., *dɔ́p* 'set (fire to something)' (40a), which can also be used with an internal object (40b):

(40a) *Yéèp nè   bu í   dɔ́p   wùù déèn*
      Yebbi person PL 3PL set_fire room DEM

     'the Yebbi people set fire to that house '

but

---

[22] I will not develop here the difficult issue of whether it would be helpful to consider *wɔ́k /jurɛn* in (39) as an "incorporation" in Baker's (1988) sense, whereby *wú/ú wèè* would become the PO.

(40b) *í   dɔ́p   yí/sí dɛ́ɛ̀n gáà dàà sè*
      3PL set_fire fire   DEM   LOC down first

    'first they get a fire burning inside [the hole]'

In (40a), the object is unrestricted: one can burn anything inflammable. In (40b), the object is restricted: one can only get fire burning. While neither usage is found with a BO in the available corpus, such utterances can be elicited for both without difficulty.

    These cases of "generic object" are thus distinct in their behavior from specialized transitive verbs such as *jùt* 'bathe' and indeed from idiomatic V O expressions of a "metaphorical" nature, cf. *tiksì* 'take, bring, put, set down (a load)', the causative derivate of *tìk* 'go, come down', but *tiksì púú* 'have a miscarriage' (*púú* 'belly').

    A more systematic study of the lexicon would be required to learn which expressions are compatible with a BO. Nevertheless, if discursive practice and not strict agrammaticality is involved[23], such a study will yield indeterminate results as some expressions may allow a BO under unusual semantic conditions which do not immediately come to the mind when the native speaker is consulted.

2.6. Semanticosyntactic ambiguity

    Let us examine in greater detail the causatives derived from intransitive verbs, for example *laksì* (irregularly from *làà* 'stay') 'lodge (someone in a place); lay (something down or on its side); install (someone in position), give (someone a title)'. This verb gives rise to a new problem of grammatical interpretation in the event (37) is assigned the structure (S) V BO RO. In

(41) *í   laksìkù   gàngì*
      3PL install:3SG chief:REAL

    'they made him their chief'

does *gàng* remain a RO as it stood to the underived verb, whereby the pronominal may be interpreted as either a BO or a PO? If a BO, must the causative be considered to remain intransitive like the base verb? Or does *gàng* now become a PO?

    The V BO RO solution leaving *laksì* as an intransitive verb seems undesirable. In its other uses, *laksì* is clearly transitive and little is to be gained by categorizing it differently in (41). The problem is then whether V BO PO or V PO RO is the "right" choice.

    In fact, there is no good test of which syntactic interpretation should apply, not only with causatives derived from intransitives, but even with some transitive base verbs. Indeed, there is nothing to distinguish, for example,

(42a) *pirìkù   mum*
      put:3SG mouth

    'he put him an announcement (= he notified him)' (BO PO ?)

from

---

[23] We find ourselves in the classic case which draws the response, You can say that, but if you do, people will say you don't know the language well. This may mean that the content being expressed by the proposed utterance is invariably couched in other terms, not that there is a grammatical rule to prevent it.

(42b) *gurkù mànáà*
     seize:3sg friend

    'he took him as a friend (= he befriended him)' (PO RO ?)

other than a perceived semantic distinction, which may be psychologically very real, but remains a tenuous basis, to say the least, for assuming a syntactic contrast[24]. To make a choice on formal grounds, we would need to have some context in which POs and ROs were treated differently. If one such exists, it is subtle and I have not yet come upon it.

    The simplest procedure would, of course, be to elicit from a speaker both an utterance adjoining a RO to (42a) and a refusal to adjoin a RO to (42b) since *mànáà* already is the RO. Excluding the possibility of an RO nevertheless presents the same problem as excluding a BO in object saturation: How can it be proved that the speaker's negative response is grammatically rather than pragmatically grounded?

    Again, one might invoke rare semantic types of verbs which clearly allow dual interpretations of the same double-object structure to prove the reality of the contrast. An example is *bitsì*, the causative derived from *bìt* 'change into, become' in transitive use and as 'change shape' intransitively :

(43a) *í jɔ̀ɔ̀n í bitsìkù kèé*
    3pl laugh 3pl change:3sg mad(man)

    'they laughed [at him] and drove him mad' (lit. 'they changed him into a madman')

(43b) *`m bitsà míí Y.*
    1sg change:2sg child Y.

    'I take the place of your child Y. (lit. 'I change for you into Y. [when you scold me like a child]')

In (43a), 'he' becomes the 'madman' and the V PO RO best fits the sense. But in (43b), 'you' does not become 'Yaaya', rather 'I' does, and the V BO PO structure is applicable. Actually, however, *bitsì* behaves in this way only because of the original dual status of the base verb and the classic causative/pluractional conflation in some verbs. (43a) alone is causative of the transitive sense; (43b) is pluractional of the intransitive sense. It might therefore be affirmed that strictly speaking two different verbs are in play here. Whatever the case in this matter, the fact of dual interpretation for a few verbs provides no help in deciding which syntactic structure is applicable to expressions which have only one interpretation.

    An even more serious problem is created by utterances where, unlike the examples in (42-43), the psychological reality of the distinction is blurred. There are indeed expressions where a fundamental syntactic indeterminacy seems to arise because their semantic content is not sufficiently precise for one interpretation or the other to prevail indisputably. Take the case of *káng* 'watch over, guard, protect':

(44) *í mà méém bu kangɛn kàà ràán*
    3pl fut children pl guard:inf as dem
    'they take care of the children thus'

There is another expression using the same verb with two objects:

---

[24] It may be noted that both verbs have corresponding reciprocals *gurkèn mànáà* 'befriend each other' *pirkèn mum* 'invite each other'.

(45) *kangkù wá/á béὲ tíi*
     guard:3SG hand M:with head
     'he protected him from attack'

which may be construed either as 'spread protectively his hand$_{PO}$ for him$_{BO}$ over his head' or as 'protected him$_{PO}$ by use of his hand$_{RO}$ over his head', the first being the simplest (perhaps the "default") double-object construal and the second being the direct expansion of the construction with only the animate PO.

     Metaphor certainly contributes to the opacity of syntactic interpretation; likewise with many idiomatic expressions, as can be seen from the question of the proper syntactic interpretation of ordinary utterances like (17a). Indeed, this utterance can easily be assigned the structure S V PO RO: literally 'he greets the chief with respect to sleep'. Nevertheless, given the use of the ordinary expressions *dɔ́ɔm láam* 'greet (people)' and *lá/ám dɔɔmɛn* '(fact of) greeting (people)', *láam* appears much more like the PO with the person greeted as BO. The structure with RO expansion thus seems to revert easily to the more "compact" BO PO structure, whatever the "logical" interpretation of the expression may be.

     An additional example taken from the domain of causative derivates is provided by *baksì* in the sense 'explain' from the transitive verb *bàk* 'follow':

(46) *`m baksìkù sát /kììn déὲn*
     1SG explain:3SG matter foundation DEM

     'I explained the situation to him' (lit. 'I made him follow the matter')

By derivation, *-kù* is PO ('I make him follow with respect to the matter', with a V PO RO structure as in 42b and 43a)[25]. Yet by a straightforward reading of the sense of the derived verb, *-kù* is the BO ('I explain the matter for his benefit').

     What now is the behavior of causative derivates from verbs with saturator objects? From *làà láam* 'sleep', we can obtain *laksìkù láam* 'put him to sleep, have or make him sleep'. Causative derivation also yields *jimsì* 'make (something) start, make (someone) get up' from intransitive *jìm* 'get up, start out, go away'. *Jìm* is used with *láam* as saturator object to obtain the meaning 'wake up', which in turn yields the derived expression *jimsì láam* 'wake (someone) up'. In the same way, *jùt wɔ́ɔk* (see 39), has a causative derivate *jutsì*, which takes an animate object followed by a term designating a liquid and means 'bathe (someone), give (someone) a bath', thus *jutsìkù wɔ́ɔk* 'bathe him/her, give him/her a bath'. These verbs therefore now pattern with (41). Indeed, *jimsì láam* and *jutsì wɔ́ɔk* are like *laksì gàng* in requiring the expression of both their animate and their inanimate objects for them to have the desired meaning: they are in essence *obligatory* double-object verbs. It is nevertheless impossible to decide in each case whether the expression has obligatory BO and PO or obligatory PO and RO.

2.7. Summary

     Here is a summary of the major features of CD semanticosyntax which have been set out above and are pertinent to the understanding of the RB:

---

[25] This follows if a causative by definition requires as patient object the agent who is caused to perform the action. The intransitive and causative senses of 'bathe' in English nevertheless show the weakness of this analysis. Indeed, the causative sense does not mean 'make someone bathe (himself)' but rather 'wash (someone)'. Similarly, in CD, as we shall see immediately, the senses will naturally be 'do something with water [reflexively, for oneself]' for *jùt* and 'do something with water for someone else' for its causative derivate *jutsì*. The number of possibilities offered by any given set for verb derivations will necessarily be far inferior to the number of precise logical relations requiring expression in a natural language. Consequently, derivates must express several such relations, and it is generally impossible to attribute a single logical structure to any specific one.

- absence of a beneficiary/recipient contrast in the canonical utterance structures;
- close association of the beneficiary/recipient with the semantic feature of animacy;
- uncertainty regarding the syntactic role, hence the semantic content, of the first nominal/pronominal object in a sequence of two objects.

In this system where the three object positions are so rarely filled, the BO PO sequence seems to have preferential status with transitive verbs. It is more "compact" than any other sequence, both in the sense that two nominals in BO PO position are semantically closer to the Modifying Noun – Modified Noun sequence used in CD, and in the sense that the RO is a "different kind" of object from the other two. Hence, provided the PO be animate, the PO RO sequence, even when etymologically justified, is easy to reinterpret as BO PO. Furthermore, though the fact is hard to prove, the BO PO sequence may well exercise a kind of attraction on the BO RO sequences found with intransitive verbs, inviting crossover from the intransitive to the transitive category.

One further remark is required to make explicit the system of CD verb derivational morphology, which has been evoked on several occasions. This morphology includes suffixes marking the pluractional and the causative (with some overlap, given that the causative suffix is sometimes used with pluractional sense). There is also a "resultative" expressing being or becoming and a reciprocal (formally the resultative of the pluractional), both of which yield intransitive verbs. All these derivates are semantically definable and productive. All other derivational suffixes are, however, semantically imprecise (though some sets of semantically related verbs can be found with each one), unproductive, limited to certain phonological environments, and often used for verbs for which no base verb is attested. We can thus note that there is no proper applicative derivation in CD.

3. Reflexive benefactives

The CD reflexive benefactive (RB) is a pronominal paradigm formally identical with the possessive paradigm to which we must now devote our attention.

3.1. CD possessive pronominals

CD has four pronominal paradigms:

- independent (nominalized) forms used inter alia after circumstantial heads;
- subject indices preceding (properly speaking, prefixed to) verbs;
- objects following (properly speaking, enclitically suffixed to) verbs whose tone they affect;
- possessives following noun phrases (occupying the penultimate position in those phrases before any demonstrative)

The possessive paradigm is:

	SG	PL
1	*mè*	*wòò*
2	*wèè*	*bèè ~ vèè*
3	*kèè*	*bèè*
Log	*mèè*	*bèè*

In addition to its proper possessive use, vd. (6, 33, 39) and others above, it has two, even three, "secondary" uses, among them the RB. Before we turn to the latter, let us first examine a use as copulae.

3.2. Possessives as copulae

In the absence of a subject index, the third person singular possessive can be seen as a copula or as a presenter of a following noun phrase with the sense 'this is a matter of, this concerns, this means', e.g.,

(47) *pén àán pɔk   súnnà sɔ́, pɔk   fàríllà sɔ́ ràn,*
    thing DEM be(come) tradition NEG be(come) obligation NEG DEM

    'something that is neither tradition nor moral obligation

    kèè pén àán kàà téém wɔɔn   wèè
    COP thing DEM like heart want:INF 2SGPOS

    can be defined as something that depends on your free will'

(48) *mínɛén   nyéén nwúù bu béen éè tèè gà,*
    LogsgIdp:Logsg see   wife   PL M   M there TOP

    '(said,) I've seen some women out there, and

    kèè nè-dɔɔkén   bu pén sɔ́, gàng bu pén
    COP person-commoner PL thing NEG chief PL thing

    this is not a matter for commoners but for royalty'

There is often a topicalized "subject":

(49) *pén tɔ́ɔm bèè gà, kèè gí*
    thing work 3PLPOS TOP COP 3SGInan

    'this is (a description of) what their job is like'

(50) *hàmmá   gà, kèè Púllì mum*
    senior_brother TOP COP Fulani speech

    '"hamma" is a Fulani word'

(51) *Awdì àán gà, kèè Púllì bìì sɔ́*
    Awdì DEM TOP COP Fulani seed NEG

    'that Awdi[26] is not of Fulani stock'

---

[26] This is word play on the part of the speaker, *aawdi* being the Fulfulde work for 'seed'.

The presented phrase is not necessarily nominal. It may be circumstantial:

(52) *dáàmáá kèè kààn*
originally   COP   thus

'that's the way it's always been, everyone agrees that's how it is'

(53) *kəmsé/ɛ́n gà,   kèè ɛ́ gɔ̀ɔ́n jé*
think:INF   TOP   COP   M   many   just

'if I start to recall [all the songs I know], there will be plenty [of them]'

Nominal propositions may also be presented:

(54) *kèè Sú/ú rɛ́ tèè*
COP   God   GR   there

'the fact is, God is there, God exists'

(55) *bùm àán gà,   kèè gáám tèè   bé*
place   DEM   TOP   COP   gossip   there   NEG

'that will be, that means a place where there is no noise'

Rare attestations include:

1) cases of a subject which is not topicalized (vd. 47, compare 49-51):

(56) *U. dá/án kèè dùrí, à   tɛ   jimɛn*
U.   DEM   COP   rain   FUT   DUR   get.up:INF

'that U. is just like the rain: he'll go away'

2) Cases of presentation of a verbal utterance (compare 54-55):

(57) *ínyéɛ́n bùm dakɛ̀n   wətbú rà   biin sɛ̀   gà,   kèè dáámɛ́ɛ̀n sɔ́*
if   place   be_clean   cut:3PL   LOC   front   first   TOP   COP   worry:INJ   NEG

'if they wake up some day in deep trouble, it's no one's worry (lit. it's a matter of "don't worry")'

3) Suffixation of an extension -´*n*, perhaps analogically with the suffix used to mark an inanimate possessive, cf. (25):

(58) *àán pénglɛ́ng, kèén   ɛ́ kààn*
DEM   trap   COP:EXT   M   thus

'that's the "pengleng" trap, that's what it's like'

First- and second-person copulae require the presence of a pronominal subject; thus, the first person singular:

(59) *`m mè nè-nòòní*
1SG   COP   person-one

'I am a solitary, isolated person'

The rare attestations suggest, however, that a propositional attribute requires the presence of an extension - `n:

- nominal proposition:

(60) `m mèn kuun lérùm dìm bé*
    1SG COP:EXT matriclan male   back NEG

    'I am without male matrikin'

- verbal proposition:

(61) `m mèn dá/á sɔ̀bì*
    1SG COP:EXT father diminish:EXT

    'I find myself with ever fewer male elders'

The second person singular copula is found without extension with a noun-phrase attribute, but takes the extension -n with either a circumstantial phrase or a proposition as attribute.

- noun phrase:

(62) sɔ́gà n wèè lérùm sɔ́*
    otherwise 2SG COP male   NEG

    'otherwise, you are not a man' (= unless you are a man)

- circumstantial phrase:

(63) nyá/á samàan, n wèen bé/ɛ́ kààm wèè gà, wii*
    what   find:2SG:FOC 2SG COP:EXT M:LOC village 2SGPOS TOP 2SGIDP

    'whatever happens to you, once you are back in your village, is your own responsibility'

(64) wii míí dá/án bóó, n wèen wàà visé/ɛ́n kóó kóbò tèè bé*
    2SGIDP child DEM   TOP   2SG COP:EXT with ask:INF   or   kobo there NEG

    'you, that child, cannot ask for so much as one kobo'

The first person plural copula apparently takes the -n extension in all contexts:

- noun phrase:

(65) wɔ́ɔ́ TákìSaa bu á wòon tɔ̀ɔ́msí bìì*
    1PLIDP clan   PL 1PL COP:EXT sheep   kind

    'we of the TS (matri)clan are akin to sheep'

- circumstantial phrase (here the progressive construction):

(66) á wòon bɛ́ wàà nyìín sɔ̀ɔ̀n dɔbɛn sɔ́bà*
    1PL COP:EXT M with now   dance dance:INF rather

    'rather, we were dancing then'

The second and third person plural copulae are identical. The third person plural is, like the third person singular, recorded with a high-tone extension:

(67) *gɔ́/ɔ́n bu gà, í   bèèn   wàà páán tí/í tèè sɔ́*
3SGIDP PL   TOP 3PL COP:EXT with   shield head there NEG

'as for them, they never have a shield (= mask) tip'

Barring error of notation, however, mid-tone extensions are also attested for both these persons:

(68) *YáámDəə nè-bu   déèn wàà, í   bèen   yí/lén pát*
clan   person-PL DEM   TOP   3PL COP:EXT thief   all

'all of those YD patriclansmen are thieves'

(69) *vɔ́/ɔ́n gà, í   bèen   bɛ́ wàà sɔ̀ɔ̀n dɔbɛn*
2PLIDP TOP 2PL COP:EXT M   with   dance dance:INF

'you people, you dance all this time'

There is also a possibility of replacing the subject index by the corresponding independent pronoun. This is attested for the third person plural.

(70) *gɔ́/ɔ́n bu bèen   Kɔɔnà buu* [27]
3SGIDP PL   COP:EXT Kona   PL

'they are from the town of Kona'

The logophoric singular copula is attested only with mid-tone extension:

(71) *dáàmáá mínɛn   gà, í   mèen nèɛ́ sɔ́*
originally LOGSGIDP TOP LOGSG COP:EXT person NEG

'even before, I was not a human being'

The reasons for the formal variations from person to person as described above are not clear. It is, however, manifest that this usage is in complementary distribution with the RB to which we now turn.

3.3. Possessives as reflexive benefactives

As the discussion in 3.2 shows, when the possessive pronominals are used with subject indices or even nominals as copulae, they have attributive sense. The attribute is generally non-verbal; use with verbal propositions as attribute is exceptional and requires further investigation. It may be, for example, that a propositional attribute is to be interpreted as a nominalization.

When possessive pronominals are postposed to the verb group in a *verbal* utterance, one obtains the form I have called a "reflexive benefactive". The construction is reflexive because the possessive form is coreferential with the subject of the verb. It is benefactive (or malefactive) in the sense that the referent of the subject is affected in a particular way by the verb process. The process is thereby contextualized to the situation in which it takes place.

If "referent of the subject" is replaced by "referent of a nonpatient object" in this broad

---

[27] In elicitation, the form with subject index and copula without extension (*í bèè*) was accepted in this context.

semantic definition, we obtain a viable definition of the object of the applicative verb form in Niger-Congo (or at least in many Benue-Congo and some Adamawa-Ubangi languages) and the BO in languages like CD. In other words, the RB effectively assigns the same semantic feature to the subject as the BO role does to an object argument.

If the semantic charge of the RB had been expressed by some kind of verbal morphology, this usage would doubtless have been more appropriately called a "middle voice"[28]. It must, however, be observed that the range of semantic features designated crosslinguistically by the latter expression is very large and not limited to autobenefaction. If there is a subsuming semantic function of the middle, it may be (in utterances with at least one animate denotatum) to convert the agent (sometimes diathetically) into an experiencer; or, if the agent retains control over the process, to attribute to the agent the additional role of experiencer; or to the experiencer, the responsibility of an agent. This function can be taken as a semantic transposition of "affectedness of the subject as the essential characteristic of the middle", an affirmation attributed by Mous and Fufa (in preparation) to Klaiman (1991).

The autobenefactive is nevertheless apparently peculiar within the generality of the middle sense. Thus, Mous and Fufa (in preparation), for whom "body orientation is central in the meaning of the derivational middle", note that

> the autobenefactive is like an epidemic: once a language community has been exposed to the option of including this semantic sense in the meaning of the middle marker (through contact with a language for which this sense is productive for the corresponding middle marker), it expands on it and the middle marker [becomes] productive for this meaning.

In Eastern Cushitic where there is a morphological autobenefactive, Mous and Qorro (2000:166) quote (Hayward 1975:209) in referring to

> indirect or autobenefactive middles, the category that Hayward in his study on Eastern Cushitic middle voice calls "the middle-voice function par excellence".

These remarks suggest that the autobenefactive is not just immediately integrated into the semantics of the middle, but can even take it over entirely. Furthermore, in languages like CD where the RB is not a part of verb morphology, the idea of the affectedness of the body as the core meaning of this structure is far from evident. Some doubt about the middle as semantic monolith therefore seems justified.

We shall return to the semantics of the RB in 3.3.5 and more generally in part 4 after a succinct formal presentation.

3.3.1. Syntactic properties

Unlike the BO, the RB is compatible with derived -*èn* resultatives:

(72) *gɔ́/ɔ́n* **tunèn kèè** *nàà póó sè sáng gà*
    3SGIDP go_out 3SGBEN in grass first again TOP
    'whenever he goes out into the bush once again'

Just as a third-person inanimate object may sometimes be pronominalized (vd. 26), a third-person RB may be associated with an inanimate subject:

---

[28] The literature also refers to an "autobenefactive", an acceptable alternative.

(73) *bùm kú dákέn   kèè   sὲ*
     place 3SG be_clean:INJ 3SGBEN first

    'it has to dawn beforehand'

Although propositions with a RB and no more than one object are more frequent, the RB is compatible with the presence of a both a BO and a PO.

(74) *naká   wèè   nòòní míí sin*
     do:1PL_BO 2SGBEN one_PO   small just

    'do[29] just one short one [i.e., sing a short song] for us'

The RB is not considered a suffix because, unlike object pronominals, it can be moved to preinfinitival position, where it stands before any preposed PO or BO, in the future form. Indeed, this is by far the preferred position:

(75) *`m mà mὲ   nyìín wá/á kurkέ/έn sin*
     1SG FUT 1SGBEN now   hand clap:INF   just

    'I'll now just applaud him' (= 'I've decided just to go along with him, not contradict him')

Postposition is nevertheless also observed:

(76) *mínεέn   mà vallìkɔɔn   mèè*
     LogsgIdp:Logsg FUT help:2/3SG:INF LogsgBEN

    '(said,) I'll give you a hand, I'm willing to help you'

The position of the aspectomodal marker *tεε* expressing duration or insistence varies freely between pre- and postposition to the infinitive, just as it does in future constructions with no RB:

(77) *í   mà bèè   jɔnàan   tεε*
     3PL FUT 3PLBEN laugh:2SG:INF DUR
    'they make fun of you'

(78) *`m mà mὲ   súún tε teen   nàa   mót bààrá ràání*[30]
     1SG FUT 1SGBEN husband DUR take:INF in:LOC day   two   DEM:EXT
    'I'll finally be getting married soon'

These examples, like (75), show that the RB stands before any PO or BO preposed to the infinitive.
    The semantic import of the RB may prevail over blocks of discourse resulting in a serial usage:

(79) *Kóó à   dàa   JàngPúlì máá, kóó da KúrúmJí/í máá, `m màà*
     or   LOC down:LOC JP   TOP or   on KJ   TOP 1SG go

    'Down this way to JangPuli or even up to KurumJii, I couldn't make

---

mè   sɔ́. `N gèt mè    gà, `n dùk mè   tii B. baan.
1SGBEN NEG 1SG go 1SGBEN TOP 1SG finish 1SGBEN at B. farm

  it. If I try to go, I can get no farther than B.'s farm.

Gɛrúm mè   dùk kèè   ɛ̀   tii B. baan.
movement 1SGPOS finish 3SGBEN LOC at B. farm

  My journey stops there at B.'s farm.'

3.3.2. Morphological features: *-n* extensions

The RB often bears a *-n* extension, but this seems in general to be a copy of another morphological marker in the same utterance. Indeed, CD has several markers of the form *-(ɛ)n* bearing one of the three contrastive level tones, among them the infinitive and the subject focalizer suffixes, both of which bear mid tone, though the formation of the infinitive also requires neutralization of the lexical tone of the verb root. Both of these suffixes can be found copied on RBs. (80) exemplifies copying from the focalizer and (81), from the infinitive marker.

(80) *mínɛɛ́n   vɛtkɔ̀ɔn   mèen*
     LOGSGIDP:LOGSG leave:2/3SG:FOC LOGSGBEN:EXT

  '(said,) I'm the one who is leaving you'

(81) *í   mà baan   bèen*[31]
     2PL FUT come:INF 2PLBEN:EXT

  'you people will come'

The copy may appear even when the RB is preposed to the infinitive:

(82) *á   à   wòon   pɛ́n dɔn saamɛn sɔ́ máá*
     1PL FUT 1PLBEN:EXT thing other find:INF   NEG TOP

  'even if we don't get anything out of it'

In an exceptional case, a redundant unextended RB is preposed to the infinitive:

(83) *`m mà mè   lɔkɛ́/ɛ́n mɛ̀ɛn   pát*
     1SG FUT 1SGBEN tell:INF   1SGBEN:EXT all

  'I will tell you all about (it, i.e., about this song)'

These cases should not be confused with the appearance of a final *-`n* in imperatives. This is not a copy but an utterance-final marker which, in the absence of the RB, can appear suffixed to the verb group.

(84) *à   tiksì   wèèn*
     2SG:IMP put_down 2SGBEN-INJ

  'put (your load) down'

While the origin of extended RBs seems to lie primarily in copying, there are nevertheless some rare cases where a RB apparently takes an extension which is formally analogous to the one

---

[31] In one other example, the extension apparently has L tone (or is toneless).

found in the copulae[32].

(85) *kálà nè-ràán wɔɔ kèè nyìí/nèn baaní páát,*
each person-DEM want 3SGBEN now:DEM come:INF:EXT all

 'anyone who wants now

í báá bèen pén liin
3PL come 3PLBEN:EXT thing eat:INF

 comes and eats'

There is apparent M/H variation in the tone of the extension:

(86) *kú kásí kèén sɔ́bà*
3SG:INJ show:INJ 3SGBEN:EXT rather

 'just let her mention [them]'

3.3.3. Morphological features: absence of agreement

An additional interesting phenomenon involving the RB is the use of a 3SG RB in association with a 3PL subject. It is easily assumed (though there is no strict proof of the hypothesis) that this usage handles situations in which the 3PL subject index has no specific referent but means 'one, everyone':

(87) *sɔ̀ɔ̀n gà, í mà kèè nyìín piré/én tii páá*
dance TOP 3PL FUT 3SGBEN now return:INF at grounds

 'for dancing, everyone now goes back to the meeting grounds'

3.3.4. The reflexive benefactive with object agreement?

In 3.1, I referred to a possible third secondary use of the possessive pronominals. Indeed, the 1SG and LOGSG possessives often directly follow the *object* pronoun form of the same persons. This usage is extremely frequent, and is conceivably euphonic in origin.

(88) *Sú/ú kú vɛrùm mè rì S. pè*
God 3SG leave:1SG 1SGBEN with S also

 'may God grant life to me and [my child] S.'

(89) *én, pàná, kú tíím mèè jé*
THAT please 2/3SG plait:LOGSG:INJ LOGSGBEN just

(she) said, Please just plait [my hair] for me'

These pronominals also occur, certainly analogically with the RB, with *-n* extension as in (90):

---

[32] A curious and perhaps substandard use of the *-n* extension is attested with the possessive modifier of a RO:

(3) *í mà gɛrɛn pén mèen*
   LOGSG FUT go:INF thing LOGSGPOS:EXT
   '(said,) I'm on my way '

This example illustrates the tendency for analogical marking to spread under the CD conditions of morphological homonymy.

(90) *ì   jukúm   mèén   yàà   tèè*
2PL:IMP look_at:LOGSG LOGSGBEN:EXT compound there

'(said,) Watch my compound for me'

Other object pronouns, particularly 2SG, may nevertheless appear in the same construction, as in (91):

(91) *kóó nakà wèè   pén àán haaní sɔ́n   /gà pát, nè-wàrí*
or   do:2SG 2SGBEN thing DEM be_proper NEG:DEM TOP all person-big

'even if he behaves improperly towards you, he's still your elder'

Other instantiations are rare or unattested, cf. with 3PL:

(92) *nɔk   gà³³, Sú/ú kú nakbú bèè   báràkà*
1SGIDP TOP   God   3SG do:3PL 3PLBEN happiness

'for my part, [I say] may God bless them'

For the time being, it is hard to know exactly what semantic import should be accorded to this usage, but it is conceivable that, at least in some cases, it serves as a variant of the RB, hence stands for *kèè* in (91-92). Another possibility is, however, that the possessive pronominal is developing as a mark of the BO to counter some of the uncertainties of syntactic interpretation described in part 2 of this paper.

3.3.5. Semantic properties

The examples presented thus far give a sampling of the semantic range of the RB. Let us look at a couple more examples with some common verbs and contrast them with the same utterance without RB to see exactly how nuances are added.

• *sát* 'say'

(93) *`n sarà   mèrì*
1SG say:2SG 1SGBEN:REAL

'I assure you' (rather than 'I say to you')

(94) *n sát wèè   gò, n kɛɛ n nyɛèm tèè sɔ́*
2SG say 2SGBEN PFV 2SG seek 2SG give:1SG there NEG

'you promised (me), but you didn't go and get me (any)' (rather than 'you told me...')

The RB expresses the subject's commitment to the content of his discourse.

• *nyíí* 'know'

(95) *nɔkiìn   nyii mè   pén déèn gáá nàà àán sɔ́,*
1SGIDP:1SG know 1SGBEN thing DEM LOC in DEM NEG

'I don't know what happened there,

---

³³ Incidentally, this example happens to show topicalization as a means of introducing an additional argument.

´n   wupsì   wá/á ré da pén
3PL hide   hand   M   on thing

    people are keeping quiet about things' ('I haven't been able to find out' rather than simply 'I don't know')

The RB expresses frustration of the effort to acquire information (and whatever benefit may derive from that information).

-     *nyéén* 'see'

  (96) `n   nyéén mè   nèé   rɛ yìsá gà, tɛnén F. sɔ́, sɔ́ dúkà
      1SG see   1SGBEN person LOC door TOP pass F. NEG NEG all

    'except for F., I've never seen any of you at my door' ('at my door *as visitors*', not simply 'in my doorway')

The RB expresses a seeing which brings pleasure or advantage.

-     *báá* 'come'

  (97) kù `m máà    sarɛn `n nóó, I. déèn à   kèè   baan
      FCT 1SG FUT:FCT say:INF 1SG say I. DEM FUT 3SGBEN come:INF

    'that makes me say to myself, I. will come' ('and when he does, I'll find out the truth' rather than simply 'he will come' with no implication)

The RB expresses the appropriateness of the subject's arrival, not necessarily to his own benefit but rather to the advantage of those who await him.

-     *nyangsì* 'spoil'

  (98) ´n nàk pén dá/án gà, í   nyangsì kèè   pén
      3PL do thing DEM   TOP 3PL spoil   3SGBEN thing

    'it's a waste of money' ('if people do that, they do it to their own detriment', not simply 'they spoil something or other')

The RB expresses the malefactive effect of the action on the agents.

4. Concluding remarks: Benefactives, the applicative and the middle voice

    It is generally accepted that Proto-Niger-Congo (PNC) had derivational verb extensions (Hyman 2007:151). These would have included an "applicative verbal derivation" (often taken to be synonymous with "benefactive"), included among the "valency-modifying" derivates, i.e., those which add (or remove) a direct object argument in a particular semantic role. This view of the applicative is grounded on phenomena observed in the Bantu languages. My own experience drawn mainly from the Adamawa-Ubangi branch of NC suggests a rather different conception of the applicative, viz., that its primary function was not the addition of a syntactic argument but rather exclusively semantic: it allowed nuancing of the base verb with the sense 'specialization of the process for a particular circumstance or purpose'. This type of applicative derivation is found (though not necessarily as a NC inheritance) in Zande, a Ubangi language, where there is a recipient/beneficiary contrast marked by different prepositions. In this language, for example, *pe* 'speak' has a pluractional derivate *pek-* 'speak repeatedly', which itself has an applicative derivate *peked-* 'tell, narrate', i.e., speak at length for a specific purpose. Likewise, *pas-* 'cook' (formally

causative but without a base verb) has an applicative derivate *pasad-* for which a variety of senses are reported. I was told it was used for 'make a decoction'. The Gores (1952) have 'heat up, cook twice', while Lagae and Van den Plas (1921/25) give 'cuire d'une manière incomplète pour empêcher la corruption'. All of these definitions are specific kinds of "cooking" done for particular reasons in specific circumstances.

The specialization of the process can sometimes be accounted autobenefactive as in the example from Boyd (1995) cited by Hyman (2007): *gbe* 'pull, attract, stretch out, brandish, suck', whose derived applicative *gbed-* has an intensive-type meaning, 'grasp, hold on strongly (including in sexual relations[34]), suck, smoke'. Another case is the intransitive *ug-* 'be dry, dry out' whose applicative *ugud-* remains intransitive with the sense 'be thin, slim down'.

In none of these cases is the Zande applicative (which I have previously called benefactive, Boyd 1995) a valency-modifying morpheme; its effect is purely semantic.

The applicative derivation, despite its apparent usefulness, is nevertheless less productive in Zande than the pluractional and the causative. Furthermore, it is semantically imprecise: the intensive sense often predominates to the extent that some formal applicatives are used as the only pluractional derivate of their base verbs. The very fact that the applicative was somehow semantically distinct from other extensions may thus have contributed to its demise.

In many NC languages, for example some in the Bantu A zone (the ones closest to CD), it seems to have fallen into total disuse. In other cases, for example Emai (an Edoid Benue-Congo language of Nigeria, Ron Schaefer, p.c.) and the central, eastern, and southern Bantu languages (Hyman 2007:157), the applicative seems to have been "conserved" by being semantically denatured and transformed into a mere valency-augmenting marker of the beneficiary/recipient argument.

Still more complex phenomena exist, as Mous (2006) shows for Bantu A44 Tunen, which seems to have retained the applicative for adding valency while developing a "middle derivation" which is semantically indistinguishable from a new appplicative, showing even examples of the drift towards the intensive sense observed in Zande. Nevertheless, the combined use of the applicative and middle markers allows for a form of diathesis whereby an animate beneficiary object or, in the absence of animate objects, an inanimate patient object can become syntactic subjects.

These data suggest that the NC applicative as understood here is semantically parallel to the Cushitic middles as described by Mous and Fufa (in preparation) just insofar as its general sense 'do in a specific way, to a specific end' takes on the specifically autobenefactive nuance 'do for one's own ends, to one's own advantage'. Syntactically speaking, however, the valency-augmenting type of applicative is closer to the diathetic functions of the Cushitic middles whose use is not limited to activities whereby an animate argument affects himself but extends to uses where notional inanimates (as body parts) affect animate benefactives (their possessors).

A fuller understanding of these parallels may come from further study of the structural interplay which may exist within derivational systems. In Niger-Congo, the Tunen case is already an eloquent example, and a closer examination of the Atlantic languages from this standpoint may prove helpful. Mous and Fufa (in preparation) look at the interrelations of passive, middle, and causative verb morphology in Cushitic.

The interplay of derivational verb morphology with case marking and the conflation or contrast of beneficiary and recipient arguments is likewise of crucial importance.

Against this background, the specificity of the CD phenomena discussed here lies in showing the autonomy of autobenefaction, which is only one possible nuance of NC applicatives and Cushitic middles. They suggest that autobenefaction can be a perceived semantic need which is satisfied independently of any morphological system. The main features to be noted in CD are:

---

[34] Cf. *coger* in some South American Spanish dialects.

a) the association of a reflexive benefactive with conflated beneficiary/recipient arguments;
b) the co-ocurrence of a reflexive benefactive with only the most vestigial applicative verb derivation of the Zande type (a half dozen verbs suffixing -*lì* which have a possible semantic affinity with base verbs);
c) the use of the possessive paradigm to express the reflexive benefactive in verbal utterances, contrasting with a copula-like use in nominal utterances.

The third point is of some importance as the Adamawa ("Kebi-Benue") language Tupuri may have a similar reflexive benefactive structure using not the possessive pronouns, but a pronominal paradigm reserved for this function, referred to by Ruelland (1992:194-5) only in distributive terms as "BC3" and glossed as '(lui)-même'. Further examples from Fiorio (2007) suggest the third person singular member of the paradigm is commonly used for nominal predication in addition to its apparent autobenefactive use in verbal propositions. A comparable use of a specific pronominal paradigm as a reflexive benefactive may also be present in the closely related language Mambay as described by Anonby (2008).

All of these cases must of course be seen in the perspective of the well-known Intransitive Copy Pronoun in Chadic and similar features in non-Chadic languages which have not yet been identified as such (Zande in the Ubangi subbranch constitutes an example). The fact that such constructions are restricted to intransitive verbs suggests limitation to a middle-verb usage. In terms of regional influence on CD and Chadic, the existence of a middle voice in Adamawa Fulfulde should also not be ignored. Attested extension to transitive constructions is thus far limited to Adamawa.

The insufficiently studied languages of the Adamawa Plateau and the contiguous regions may yet reveal other pertinent phenomena for the semanticosyntax of benefaction.

Raymond Boyd
August 2010

Abbreviations used in word-for-word glossing

AUX	consecutive auxiliary verb
BEN	reflexive benefactive
COP	copula
CSQ	consequential marker
DEM	demonstrative
DUR	durative marker
EXT	extension
FCT	factitive
FOC	focalizer
FUT	future
GNR	"generic" marker
IMP	imperative
INAN	inanimate
IDP	independent pronoun
INF	infinitive
INJ	injunctive
LOC	locative
LOG	logophoric pronoun
M	modal marker
NEG	negative
PL	plural
POS	possessive
PFV	perfective
Q	polar (or redundant) interrogative
SG	singular
THAT	opener of reported speech
TOP	topicalizer
1,2,3	first, second, third person
2/3	non-speaker in logophoric propositions

Bibliographical references

Anonby, Erik John, 2008. *Mambay (Niger-Congo, Adamawa): Phonology and morphology*, doctoral dissertation, Universiteit te Leiden.

Baker, Mark C. 1988. *Incorporation: a theory of grammatical function changing*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Boyd, Raymond, 1995. De l'expression à l'expressivité en morphologie: analyse comparée de la dérivation verbale en zande et en nzakala. *Afrikanistische Arbeitspapiere* 43: 5-36.

------------------, 2004. The syntax and semantics of the Chamba-Daka verbal noun. *Afrika und Übersee* 87: 193-288.

------------------, 2010. A "reflexive benefactive" in Chamba-Daka (Adamawa branch, Niger-Congo family). In Fernando Zúñiga et Seppo Kittilä (eds.), *Benefactives and malefactives: Typological perspectives and case studies* (Typological Studies in Language 92), 331–350. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Fiorio, Elisa, 2007. *L'étranger chez les tupuri du Tchad: étude ethnolinguistique de la notion de l'étranger d'une population de langue Adamawa*, thèse de doctorat, Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales (INALCO).

Gore, B. C. and Mrs. B.C. Gore, 1952. *Zande and English dictionary.* London: Sheldon (rev. ed. by H.P. Bullen).

Hayward, Richard J., 1975. Middle voice verb forms in Eastern Cushitic. *Transactions of the Philological Society 1973*, 203-224.

Huang, C. T. James, 1984. On the distribution and reference of empty pronouns. *Linguistic Inquiry* 15:531-574.

Hyman, Larry M. 2007. Niger-Congo Verb Extensions: Overview and Discussion. In *Selected Proceedings of the 37th Annual Conference on African Linguistics*, ed. Doris L. Payne and Jaime Peña. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project, 149-163.

Klaiman, M.H., 1991. *Grammatical voice.* Cambridge: CUP.

Lagae, C.R. and V.H. Van den Plas, 1921/25. *La langue des Azandé*, 3 vols. Ghent: Veritas.

Mous, Maarten, 2006. "Voice in Tunen: the so-called passive prefix bé-." In A. Lubotsky et al. (eds.) *Evidence and Counter-evidence, Festschrift F. Kortlandt*, Volume I (32-33). Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 1-10.

Mous, Maarten and Tolemariam Fufa, in preparation. "Derivational middle in African languages."

Mous, Maarten and Martha Qorro, 2000. The middle voice in Iraqw. In *Lugha za Tanzania, Languages of Tanzania, Studies dedicated to the memory of Prof. Clement Maganga*, ed. Kulikoyela K. Kahigi, Yared Kihore and Maarten Mous. Leiden: CNWS, 157-176.

Ruelland, Suzanne, 1992. *Description du parlet tupuri de Mindaore, Mayo-Kebbi (Tchad): phonologie, morphologie, syntaxe*, thèse pour le doctorat d'état ès-lettres. Lille: Atelier national de reproduction des thèses.

Tsuboi, Eijiro, 2010. Malefactivity in Japanese. In Fernando Zúñiga et Seppo Kittilä (eds.), *Benefactives and malefactives: Typological perspectives and case studies* (Typological Studies in Language 92), 419–436. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Van Valin, Robert, 1993. *Advances in Role and Reference Grammar* (Current Issues in Linguistic Theory 82). Amsterdam: Benjamins.