

DOM in Sesotho double object applicatives

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While the most common form of DOM is through case marking, DOM also takes other forms such as null/overt lexical marking (cf. Schwenter and Silva 2003 on Brazilian Portuguese) and agreement (cf. Morimoto 2002 on Bantu DOM). In this talk, I take a look at other forms of DOM, manifested through pronominalization and positional marking of certain objects in double object applicatives in the Bantu language Sesotho.

Sesotho is a symmetrical object language in which both objects of a double object construction show the properties of true objects (e.g. ability to passivize, pronominalize). Sesotho differs from other symmetrical object languages in the Bantu family in that the animate object must be adjacent to the verb when both objects are full NPs, and it is also the animate object that must be overtly expressed, either as a full NP or an incorporated pronoun. The inanimate object, on the other hand, is not positionally restricted and can also be null. When there is equal animacy in the two objects, either can be adjacent to the verb or be pronominalized, and hence ambiguity arises. I explore these animacy effects in the double object construction from the perspective of DOM and examine what (additional) function is expressed by differential marking of animate objects.