

〈特集「受動表現」〉

Passive constructions in Tshivenda (S20) ベンダ語 (S20) の受動表現

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要旨：本稿は、語研論集 14 号(2009)所収の調査票にもとづいて収集したベンダ語(バントゥ系；南アフリカ共和国)の受動表現に関する記述的資料を提供するものである。

Abstract: This article presents descriptive data on various passive constructions in Tshivenda, a southern Bantu language spoken in South Africa. The data was collected through the questionnaire “Passive expressions” designed in *Journal of the Institute of Language Research* 14, 2009.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15026/0002001066>

キーワード：ベンダ語, 受動表現, バントゥ系

Keywords: Tshivenda, passive, Bantu

1. Introduction

The goal of this paper is to describe passive constructions in Tshivenda (S20), a Bantu language spoken in Limpopo, South Africa, and southern parts of Zimbabwe. The passive morpheme is -(i)w-. Tshivenda is one of South Africa's 12 official languages and is primarily spoken in the Limpopo Province by the Vhavana people. The language comprises six dialects: Tshiphani, Tshilembetu, Tshimanda, Tshiilafuri, Tshironga, and Tshimbedzi. Among these, the Tshiphani dialect has been standardized and is used in formal contexts such as parliamentary proceedings and educational instruction.

Linguistically, Tshivenda is characterized by its five vowel sounds and two high vowels. The Berlin Missionaries played a pivotal role in teaching the Vhavana how to read and write in Tshivenda, thereby facilitating the development of literacy in the language.

The Vhavana people trace their origins to the Great Lakes region of Central Africa. Their migration Southward, crossing the Limpopo River, eventually led to their settlement in the present-day Limpopo Province of South Africa. Historically, the Vhavana were among the last African groups to migrate to this region. The Venda Kingdom flourished between the 16th and 19th centuries and was distinguished by its centralized political system and well-organized villages. One of the key influences on the early Vhavana was the Mapungubwe Kingdom, a sophisticated civilization in southern Africa known for its thriving trade and agricultural economy. Mapungubwe



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also contributed to the development of social stratification, which shaped the early Venda societies. The Vhavenda's migration from the Zimbabwean plateau to the Soutpansberg region and surrounding areas in Limpopo was part of the broader Bantu migration. By the 16th and 17th centuries, they had established structured political entities under the leadership of rulers referred to as kings or chiefs. The Venda Kingdom, particularly at Dzata, became renowned for its impressive dry-stone walls, which symbolized unity and authority.

2. Basic data

Passive sentences¹ in Tshivenda are generated using the verbal extension *-iw-* after the verb root. In (1), the verb *rwa* 'hit' has the passive extension *-iw-*, showing that the subject of the sentence *Mutapeli* has a patient role, and *Nthambeleni* is the agent of the sentence.

(1) Basic passive and active sentences [Item 1-1]

a. *Mutapeli o rwiwa nga Nthambeleni.*

Mutapeli o rw-iw-a nga Nthambeleni

Mutapeli SM1 hit-PASS-FV by Nthambeleni

'Mutapeli was hit by Nthambeleni'

b. Active

Nthambeleni o rwa Maṭodzi.

Nthambeleni o rwa Maṭodzi.

Nthambeleni SM1 hit Maṭodzi

'Nthambeleni hits Maṭodzi'

Passive can also be used with the inanimate subject as in (2). Either an inalienable noun (2a) or an alienable noun (2b) are possible as a subject of a passive.

(2) Inanimate subject in passive [Item 1-2]

a. Inanimate subject 'foot'

Mulenzhe wa Mutapeli wo kandwa nga Nthambeleni.

mu-lenzhe wa Mutapeli wo kand-w-a nga Nthambeleni

3-foot ASSC3 Mutapeli SM3 step-PASS-FV by Nthambeleni

'Mutapeli's foot was stepped on by Nthambeleni'

b. Inanimate subject 'wallet'

Tshipatshi tsha Rendani tsho tswiwa nga Mutshidzi.

tshi-patshi tsha Rendani tsho tsw-iw-a nga Mutshidzi

7-wallet ASSC7 Rendani SM7 steal-PASS-FV by Mutshidzi

'Rendani's wallet was stolen by Mutshidzi.'

Passive morpheme can also be used for causative type meaning. In (3), the causative meaning is expressed.

¹ Subject markers in Tshivenda are written separate from the host verb in the orthography. In Bantu linguistics, these subject markers are morphologically identified as a prefix attached to the stem. Following the orthographic rendition, however, this paper does not connect the subject marker and the verbal stem with a hyphen.

(3) Passive for causative meaning [Item 1-3]

- a. *Mutapeli o vha a na tshi-patshi tsho tswiwaho nga Mutshidzi.*
 Mutapeli o vha.a.na tshi-patshi tsho tsw-iw-a-ho nga Mutshidzi.
 Mutapeli SM1 2rel 7-wallet SM7 steal-PASS-FV-LOC by Mutshidzi
 ‘Mutapeli had his wallet stolen by Mutshidzi.’

In (4), the intended meaning of the first sentence is ‘I was cried by the baby’, meaning ‘the baby cried’. The construction is formed by adding an applicative before a passive morpheme.

(4) Passive form of an intransitive [Item 1-4]

- a. *Madekwe, ndo lilelwa nga n'wana, a tho ngo edela na luthihi.*
 madekwe, ndo lil-el-w-a nga n'wana, a tho ngo edela na
 last.night 1SG cry-APPL-PASS-FV by 1.baby NEG 1SG.NEG POT.NEG sleep with
 luthihi.
 all
 ‘Last night, the baby cried (lit. I was cried by the baby). So, I couldn’t sleep at all’

In (5-7), the examples show that the agent by-phrase is not required in passives. In (5), the agent *nga*-phrase is optional. In (6), the agent is generic as it refers to the people in Canada, but this sentence is not expressed in passive. The example in (7) shows that a patient with a passive verb is allowed when the agent is intended not to be shown.

(5) With ‘to build’ [Item 1-5]

- Tshifhaṭo tshiswa tsho fhaṭwa (nga Maṭodzi).*
 Tshi-fhaṭo tshi-swa tsho fhaṭ-w-a (nga Maṭodzi).
 7-building 7-new SM7 build-PASS-FV by Matodzi
 ‘A new building was built (by Matodzi).’

(6) Generic agent (non-passive form) [Item 1-6]

- a. *Tshifura tshi ambya Khanada.*
 tshi-fura tshi amby-a Khanada.
 7-french SM7 speak-FV Canada
 ‘French is being spoken in Canada.’

(7) Agent is implied [Item 1-7]

- a. *Tshipatshi tsho tswiwa (nga Makhadzi).*
 tshi-patshi tsho tsw-iw-a nga Makhadzi
 7-wallet SM7 steal-PASS-FV by Makhadzi
 ‘The wallet was stolen (by Makhadzi).’

In (8), the subject ‘a picture’ of the sentence is ‘on the wall’ as a result of the verbal action ‘to hang’. Venda expresses the sentence with a transitive verb that is used as an unaccusative.

(8) Unaccusative verb [Item 1-8]

Tshifanyiso tsho nembeledza kha luvhondo.

tshi-fanyiso tsho nembeledza kha lu-vhondo.

7-picture SM7 hang on 11-wall

‘A picture is on the wall.’

Passive can be used in emotion verbs as in (9).

(9) Emotion verbs and passives [Item 1-9]

a. *Makhadzi u funwa nga Nkhuliseni.*

Makhadzi u fun-w-a nga Nkhuliseni.

makhadzi SM1 love-PASS-FV by Nkhuliseni

‘Makhadzi is loved by Nkhuliseni.’

In (10a), passive is used with a message verb *vhudza* ‘to tell’. The example in (10b) shows the same expression with an active verb.

(10) ‘Nthambeleni was told “...” by Mutshidzi.’ [Item 1-10]

a. *Nthambeleni o vhudzwa uri: “Tuwani” nga Mutshidzi.*

Nthambeleni o vhudz-w-a uri: “Tuwani” nga Mutshidzi

Nthambeleni SM1 tell-PASS-FV that: “Tuwani” by Mutshidzi

‘Nthambeleni was told Tuwani” by Mutshidzi.’

b. *Makhadzi o ri: “Idani” kha Mutshidzi.*

Makhadzi o ri: “Idani” kha Mutshidzi.

Makhadzi SM1 say Idani to Mutshidzi.

‘Makhadzi said “Idani” to Mutshidzi’

In (11), a sentence with two clauses is shown. When the first clause is a passive, the subject of the passive sentence can be omitted in the second clause.

(11) Passive and continuing sentences [Item 1-10a]

a. *Mutshidzi o vhidzwa nga Makhadzi, zwa zwino u lufherani lwa Makhadzi.*

Mutshidzi o vhidz-w-a nga Makhadzi, zwa zwino u lufhera-ni lwa

Mutshidzi SM1 call-PASS-FV by Makhadzi, CONJ SM1 11.room-LOC ASSC11

Makhadzi.

Makhadzi

‘Mutshidzi was called by Makhadzi, and is in Makhadzi’s room now.’

(12) Active and continuing sentences [Item 1-10-b]

- a. *Mutshidzi o vhidza Makhadzi, zwa zwino Makhadzi u lufherani lwa Mutshidzi.*

Mutshidzi o vhidz-a Makhadzi, zwa zwino Makhadzi u lufhera-ni lwa
Mutshidzi SM1 call-PST-FV Makhadzi, CONJ Makhadzi SM1 11.room-LOC ASSC11
Mutshidzi.

Mutshidzi

‘Mutshidzi called Makhadzi, and Makhadzi is in Mutshidzi’s room now.’

3. Conclusion

In this short paper, we have shown samples of Tshivenda passive sentences. The examined examples mostly allow passive morphemes. Sentences with the generic agent and the unaccusative verb in (8), however do not allow passive morphemes.

Abbreviations

1, 2, 3, ...: Noun class numbers

1SG, 2PL, ...: Person and Number

AUG: AUGment (initial vowel prefixed to a noun class prefix)

CJ: Conjoint (a verbal form obligatorily followed by a post-verbal constituent)

COMP: Complementiser

DJ: Disjoint (a verbal form usually not followed by a post-verbal constituent)

FV: Final Vowel (default inflectional suffix of the finite verb)

INF: Infinitive

LOC: Locative

NEG: Negative marker

OM: Object Marker

PASS: Passive

PERF: Perfect

POSS: Possessive pronoun

SM: Subject Marker

謝辞

This work was mainly supported by JSPS KAKENHI Promotion of Joint International Research (Fostering Joint International Research (B)) 21KK0005. This study was also supported by JSPS KAKENHI (B) 23K25319, and the ILCAA joint research project 'Diachronic Perspectives on Language Description and Typology in Bantu (jrp000292).

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原稿受理: 2024 年 11 月 21 日