

<特集「アスペクト」>

Aspects in Northern Sotho (S32) 北ソト語 (S32) のアスペクト表現

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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北ソト語(S32) (バントゥ系；南アフリカ共和国)のアスペクト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 aspect constructions in Northern Sotho (S32), a southern Bantu language spoken in South Africa. The data was collected through the questionnaire “Aspects” designed in *Journal of the Institute of Language Research* 14, 2009.

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1. Introduction

Northern Sotho language (S21), also called Sepedi, is a Southern Bantu language mainly spoken in Limpopo, South Africa. This paper describes aspect constructions. Statistics from Census 2022 (Statistics South Africa, 2022) show that about 6 million people (10% of the population) in South Africa speak Northern Sotho as their home language. Examples are written with the orthography, a morpheme-by-morpheme analysis and interlinear glosses. In the Northern Sotho orthography, subject markers are written independent from the following verb, which is a convention determined in the orthography, and should not be taken as a morphosyntactic feature. A companion paper by Mphasha et al. (2024) describes the passive constructions in Northern Sotho.

2. Data with the intransitive verb

The perfect aspect is investigated using the intransitive verb *tla* ‘to arrive’ in this section. In (1a), the perfect aspect is expressed with the *-ile* suffix on the verb. The construction has an adverbial auxiliary verb *šala* ‘already’ with the perfect suffix. A phonological alternation called imbrication occurs: /šal-ile/ → [šetše] (cf. Bastin 1983, Hyman 1995). A sentence with a subject that is a deictic noun as in (1b) also takes the *-ile* suffix. In (2), the situation is that the speaker knows that Thato is on its way. The construction uses the progressive *e-* prefix before the verb.



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(1) [Item 2-1]

- a. [Situation: Thato has arrived]

Thato o šetše a tlile.

Thato o šal-ile a tl-ile

Thato SM1 already-PRF SM1 arrive-PRF

‘Thato already came’

- b. [Situation: That person has arrived]

Motho yola o šetše a tlile.

mo-tho yola o šal-ile a tl-ile

1-person that.1 SM1 already-PRF SM1 arrive-PRF

‘That person already came.’

(2) [Item 2-2]

- a. [Situation: Thato has not yet arrived]

Thato o šetše a etla.

Thato o šetše a e-tl-a

Thato SM1 already SM1 PROG-arrive-FV

‘Thato has already been coming.’

- b. [Situation: ‘That person has not yet arrived’]

Motho yola o šetše a etla.

mo-tho yola o šetše a e-tl-a

1-person that.1 SM1 already SM1 PROG-arrive-FV

‘That person has already been coming.’

In (3) and (4), the negative sentences are shown. In (3), the focus of the sentence is the action of Thato, and the negative sentences take the progressive form of the verb. In (4), the focus of the negative is the non-arrival of Thato, and the verb takes the negative suffix *-e* as in (4a) and (4c). Northern Sotho speakers also permit the verb with the final vowel *-a* as in (4b) and (4d).

(3) [Item 2-3]

- a. [Situation: Thato’s action is the focus of the sentence]

Thato ga se a hlwa a etla.

Thato ga-se a hlwa a e-tl-a

Thato NEG-PST SM1 yet SM1 PROG-come-FV

‘Thato hasn’t not been coming yet.’

- b. [Situation: That person’s action is the focus of the sentence]

Motho yola ga se a hlwa a etla.

mo-tho yola ga-se a hlwa a e-tl-a

1-person that.1 NEG-PST SM1 yet SM1 PROG-arrive-FV

‘That person hasn’t been coming yet.’

(4) [Item 2-4]

- a. [Situation: Thato's non-arrival is the focus of the sentence]

Thato ga se a tle.

Thato ga-se a tl-e

Thato NEG-PST SM1 arrive-NEG.FV

'Thato hasn't come yet.'

- b. *Thato ga se a tla.*

Thato ga-se a tl-a

Thato NEG-PST SM1 arrive-FV

'Thato hasn't come yet.'

- c. [Situation: 'That person's non-arrival is the focus of the sentence']

Motho yola ga se a tle.

mo-tho yola ga-se a tl-e

1-person that.1 NEG-PST SM1 arrive-NEG.FV

'That person hasn't come yet.'

- d. *Motho yola ga se a tla.*

mo-tho yola ga-se a tl-a

1-person that.1 NEG-PST SM1 arrive-FV

'That person hasn't come yet.'

The near future aspect is expressed with the future morpheme *tla*, accompanied by the adverb *ka pela* 'soon'.

In (5), the speaker knows that Thato or that person will arrive soon.

(5) [Item 2-5]

- a. *Thato o tla tla ka pela.*

Thato o tla tl-a ka.pela

Thato SM1 FUT come-FV soon

'Thato will come soon.'

- b. *Motho yola o tla tla ka pela.*

mo-tho yola o tla tl-a ka.pela

1-person that.1 SM1 FUT come-FV soon

'That person will come soon.'

The vocative form about the arrival of Thato in (6) is expressed with the perfect *-ile* morpheme.

(6) [Item 2-6]

(Mm!) Thato o tlile!

(mm) Thato o tl-ile

(oh) Thato SM1 come-PRF

'(Oh!) Thato has come!'

When a sentence is using the simple past as in (7), Northern Sotho employs the *-ile* suffix, suggesting that the

-ile in Northern Sotho has the past meaning, in addition to the perfect aspect. The negative form in (8) has the verb with the negative suffix *-e*.

(7) [Item 2-7]

Thato o tlile maabane.

Thato o tl-ile maabane

Thato SM1 come-PRF yesterday

‘Thato came yesterday.’

(8) [Item 2-8]

Thato ga se a tle maabane.

Thato ga-se a tl-e maabane

Thato NEG-PST SM1 come-NEG.FV yesterday

‘Thato didn’t come yesterday.’

3. Data with the transitive verb

With the transitive verb *ja* ‘eat’, this section elicited sentences with or without the completion of the eating of an apple. The completion of the action of eating and apple requires the *-ile* suffix in (9a). In (9b), the potential sentence is shown, which is used when someone brings a lot of apple, and the speaker showed their willingness to eat an apple. In (9c), a simple future is shown with the future morpheme *tla*.

(9) [Item 2-9]

a. *Ke šetše ke jele apola yela.*

ke šal-ile ke j-ile apola yela

1SG already-PRF 1SG eat-PRF apple that

‘I already ate that apple.’

b. *Nka ja apola yela.*

n-ka j-a apola yela

1SG-POT eat-FV apple that

‘I could eat that apple’

c. *ke tla ja apola yela.*

ke tla j-a apola yela

1SG FUT eat-FV apple that

‘I will eat that apple (at a later time)’

The negative forms show some differences by mood. In the indicative mood in (10a), the subject marker and the verb take the negative final vowel *-e*, whereas they both take corresponding affirmative forms (the subject marker *ka* and the final vowel *-a*) in the consecutive mood as in (10b). The future negative is shown in (10c).

(10) [Item 2-10]

- a. *Ga se ke je apola yela.*
 ga-se ke j-e apola yela
 NEG-PST 1SG eat-NEG.FV apple that
 ‘I haven’t eaten that apple yet.’ (indicative mood)
- b. *Ga se ka ja apola yela.*
 ga-se ka j-a apola yela
 NEG-PST 1SG eat-FV apple that
 ‘I haven’t eaten that apple yet.’ (consecutive mood)
- c. *Nka se je apola yela.*
 n-ka-se j-e apola yela
 1SG-NEG eat-NEG.FV apple that
 ‘I won’t eat that apple.’

When an event has just begun, Northern Sotho uses the present form of the verb, but the adverb *gonabjale* ‘now’ is required to express that meaning as in (11).

(11) [Item 2-11]

- Thato o ja apola yela gonabjale.*
 Thato o j-a apola yela *(gonabjale).
 Thato SM1 eat-FV apple that now
 ‘Thato is eating that apple just now.’

4. Data with the stative verb

In sentences with the stative verb *bulega* ‘to open’, the perfect *-ile* morpheme is used in both present (12a) and past tense (12b).

(12) [Item 2-12]

- a. *Lefasetere le bulegile.*
 le-fasetere le buleg-ile
 5-window SM5 open-PRF
 ‘The window is open.’
- b. *Lefasetere le be le bulegile.*
 le-fasetere le be le buleg-ile
 5-window SM5 PST SM5 open-PRF
 ‘The window was open.’

When the sentences imply that someone did open the window, the passive suffix *-iw* is added to the verb. In such cases, the verb only takes the *-e* suffix as in (13), and not the *-ile* suffix.

(13) [Item 2-12]

a. *Lefasetere le butšwe.*

le-fasetere le bul-iw-e
 5-window SM5 open-PASS-FV
 ‘The window is opened.’

b. *Lefasetere le be le butšwe.*

le-fasetere le be le bul-iw-e
 5-window SM5 PST SM5 open-PASS-FV
 ‘The window was opened.’

5. Habitual aspect

In Northern Sotho, the present tense verbal forms express the habitual aspect. The daily habit of reading newspaper in (14) is such an example.

(14) [Item 2-13]

Ke bala kuranta mosong wo mongwe le wo mongwe.

ke bala kuranta moso-ng wo mongwe le wo mongwe
 1SG read newspaper 3.morning-ADV POSS3 one and POSS3 one
 ‘I read the newspaper every morning.’

The verb *lebelelega* ‘to resemble’ is used in a present tense (15)

(15) [Item 2-14]

O lebelelega go swana le mmago.

o lebelelega go swana le mmago
 2SG resemble to like with your.mother
 ‘You look like your mother.’

A natural phenomenon such as the earth’s movement is also expressed in the present tense as in (16).

(16) [Item 2-22]

Lefase le sepela le dikologa letšatši.

le-fase le sepela le dikologa le-tšatši
 5-earth SM5 move SM5 around 5-sun
 ‘The earth goes around the sun.’

Northern Sotho uses the past tense construction with *be* in the past habitual as shown in (17). The verb *thwaela* ‘to use’ appears in the perfect form with the *-ile* suffix.

(17) [Item 2-15]

Ke be ke tlwaelše go ya sekolong letšatši le lengwe le le lengwe.

ke be ke tlwael-ile go ya sekolong le-tšatši le lengwe le le lengwe
1SG PST 1SG use-PRF to go school 5-day ASSC5 one and ASSC5 one

‘I used to go to school every day (back then).’

6. Other aspect expressions

Various other aspect expressions in Northern Sotho are described in this section. The experience of having been to a different location is expressed with the *-ile* suffix as in (18).

(18) [Item 2-16]

Ke bile Limpopo.

ke ba-ile Limpopo

1SG COP-PRF Limpopo

‘I have been to Limpopo.’

The start of the movement of a bus is expressed as in (19a) in colloquial Northern Sotho, without the *-ile* suffix. However, note that a literal translation in (19b) uses the *-ile* suffix in *thomile* ‘began’, showing a discrepancy between the colloquial form and literally translated form.

(19) [Item 2-17]

a. *Mafelelong, pese e a sepela.*

mafelelong pese e a sepela

finally bus SM9 move

‘Finally, the bus began moving.’

b. *Mafelelong, pese e thomile go sepela.*

mafelelong pese e thom-ile go sepela

finally bus SM9 begin-PRF to move

‘Finally, the bus began moving.’ (literal translation)

In (20), an entire event of sleeping takes place in the past. Northern Sotho uses the *-ile* suffix to describe such a situation.

(20) [Item 2-18]

O robetše letšatši ka moka maabane.

o robel-ile le-tšatši ka moka maabane

SM1 slept-PRF 5.day of all yesterday

‘She slept all day yesterday.’

When an event is happening at a short interval as in (21), Northern Sotho uses the *-ile* suffix as well.

(21) [Item 2-19]

Ke lekile go ja gannyane.
 ke lek-ile go e ja gannyane
 1SG try-PRF to OM9 eat a.bit
 ‘I tried eating it a bit.’

An event describing the distribution of an action, the *-ile* suffix is used as in (22).

(22) [Item 2-20]

O di file yo mongwe le yo mongwe.
 o di f-ile yo mongwe le yo mongwe
 SM1 OM10 give-PRF person and person
 ‘He gave them to everyone’

The hortative form in Northern Sotho has the verb with the *-e* form as in (23).

(23) [Item 2-21]

A re sepele!
 a re sepel-e
 le 1PL move-FV
 ‘Let’s go!’

The near future event is described with the *le go* construction as in (24a). When the action was describing a potential past event, the auxiliary verb *be* ‘PST’ is used as in (24b).

(24) [Item 2-23, 24]

a. [Situation: almost falling down due to a storm]

Mohlare wola o kgauswi le go wa.
 mohlare wola o kgauswi le go wa
 3.tree that SM3 about with 15 fall
 ‘That tree is about to topple.’

b. [Situation: almost falling down due to a curb]

Ke be ke le kgauswi le go wa.
 ke be ke le kgauswi le go wa
 1SG PST 1SG with about with 15 fall
 ‘I was almost about to trip.’

A sentence describing a future event as in (25) uses the future marker *tla* in both clauses.

(25) [Item 2-25]

Re tla ba le ba-eng gosasa, ka gona ke tla reka borotheo.

re tla ba le ba-eng gosasa ka.gona ke tla reka borotheo
1PL FUT have with 2-guest tomorrow so 1SG FUT buy bread

‘We will have guests tomorrow, so I will buy some bread.’

In (26), the purchasing of the bag happened during a trip to Polokwane. The matrix clause verb takes the *-ile* suffix, and the subordinate clause also takes *-ile*. In (27), the action of purchasing a bag occurred prior to the trip to Polokwane. The matrix verb still takes the *-ile* suffix, but the verb in the subordinate clause is expressed in the progressive form.

(26) [Item 2-26]

[Situation: I was in Polokwane]

Ke rekile mokotla wo ge ke ile Polokwane.

ke rek-ile mokotla wo ge ke y-ile Polokwane
1SG buy-PRF bag this when 1SG go-PRF Polokwane

‘I (had) bought this bag when I went to Polokwane.’

(27) [Item 2-27]

[Situation: before going to Polokwane]

Ke rekile mokotla wo pele ke eya Polokwane.

ke rek-ile mokotla wo pele ke e-ya Polokwane
1SG buy-PRF bag this before 1SG PROG-go Polokwane

‘I (had) bought this bag before going to Polokwane.’

The factive verb *tseba* ‘to know’ in (28) is in the *-ile* form in the matrix clause. The preceding action also takes the *-ile* suffix.

(28) [Item 2-28]

Ke tsebile gore o rekile mokotla wo mmarakeng wo.

ke tseb-ile gore o rek-ile mokotla wo mmarake-ng wo
1SG know-PRF that SM1 buy-PRF bag this market-LOC this

‘I knew he (had) bought this bag in this market.’

7. Conclusion

An investigation into Northern Sotho aspect constructions has shown that the perfect aspect *-ile* can also be used in the simple past sentence. Future events are expressed with the *tla* morpheme. Data comparing the perfect and simple past forms in Northern Sotho need future studies of aspect constructions.

Abbreviations

1, 2, 3, ...:	Noun class numbers	LOC:	Locative
1SG, 2PL, ...:	Person and Number	NEG:	Negative marker
ADV:	Adverb	OM:	Object Marker
ASSC:	Associative marker	PASS:	Passive
COP:	Copular	PRF:	Perfect
DEM:	Demonstrative	POSS:	Possessive
FUT:	Future	POT:	Potential
FV:	Final Vowel (default inflectional suffix of the finite verb)	PROG:	Progressive
HORT:	Hortative	PST:	Past Tense
		SM:	Subject Marker

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