

The applicative and double object constructions in Ma'a/Mbugu

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Mbugu (or Ma'a) is the language which is spoken by the Mbugu people living in several areas in the west Usambara Mountains, Tanzania. It has two varieties. The first variety is a so-called "mixed language". It has Bantu concord system and a lot of words of non-Bantu origin and called Kimbugu cha ndani in Swahili, which means 'Inner Mbugu'. The other variety is thought to be almost the same as a Bantu language, Kipare (G22, classified by Guthrie 1948). It is called Kimbugu cha kawaida 'Normal Mbugu'. The difference between the two varieties is only seen in vocabulary (mostly content words).

Applicative suffix of Mbugu is - \tilde{m} - \tilde{m} - \tilde{m} is for the verb roots which end in a vowel. Applicative verbs take up to two arguments. Intransitive verbs come to transitive ones and transitive verbs come to ditransitive ones. Normally applicative object is placed in immediate post-verb position, but in instrumental applicative construction, the primary object can be placed in immediate post-verb position as well. Double object marking is possible in Kimbugu. It is possible in applicative construction as well. In this case, applicative object precedes primary object. Relating object prefix, reflexive prefix ku- is placed in the same slot as where object prefix is placed. The combination of a single object prefix and a reflexive prefix is possible in Inner Mbugu, but not in Normal Mbugu. In Inner Mbugu, the combination of a reflexive prefix and object prefix is also possible. Both primary object and applicative object can be the subject of the passivized sentence. From these facts, primary object and applicative object has the same objecthood (symmetrical).

Applicative construction of Kimbugu has a wide range of semantic roles such as Beneficiary (malefactive), Recipient, Instrumental, Direction/Goal, Possession and Reason.