

The generative lexicon and the nominalizations in Sesotho

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The issue of deverbal is largely unexplored within a theoretical framework in the African languages although descriptive grammars regularly include reference to and limited examples of deverbal nouns. Previous studies focused on only specific features of deverbal nouns. These descriptive semantic studies failed to account for important questions with regard to morphological and semantic properties of deverbal nominals. Current approaches to morphology play a prominent role in research on the semantic interpretation of deverbal nouns. Deverbal nouns in Sesotho are morphologically derived by affixation (i.e. prefixes and suffixes). Sometimes these morphemes provide a generalization that fail to account for semantic similarity between the deverbal derived nouns and the non-derived nouns. This generalization is encountered at both syntactic and morphological level. Relying exclusively on morphological clues to determine the interpretation of a deverbal noun obscures the problem rather than clarifying it. The syntactic generalization also appears to be inadequate. In this paper, a semantic analysis of deverbal nouns in Sesotho within the assumptions of lexical semantics with a focus on Generative Lexicon Theory is explored. The deverbal nouns in Sesotho are analyzed semantically within specific parameters taking into account the deverbal noun as a whole. This is done by viewing how word meaning interact with a set of generative mechanisms to account for the creative use of language. These mechanisms involve the levels of representations (i.e. argument, event and qualia structures) which provides information about the number and type of arguments; the event type of a lexical item and how these events are tied together within different relations. The focus is on nominalizations in classes 1, 3, 7, 9 and 14.