

CHAPTER 2

2. Predicate Argument Structure (PAS)

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter identified the three main issues in Xitsonga that this study will deal with, viz. the predicate argument structure (PAS) of the verb; the occurrence of alternations in Xitsonga and their semantic interpretation; and the effect of verbal affixes on the PAS of the verb.

This chapter is concerned with the predicate argument structure. According to Grimshaw (1990:1) the term *argument structure* “refers to the lexical representation of grammatical information about a predicate”. There are two distinct lexical representations, viz. the lexical-syntactic and the lexical-semantic representations (The lexical-semantic representation is also referred to as the *lexical conceptual structure* (LCS) by Jackendoff (1990), Rappaport and Levin (1986) and Zubizarreta (1987)).

The lexical-syntactic representation is equated with the number of arguments (i.e. linguistic expressions such as NPs that are assigned theta roles) related by the predicate. In this case an explanation of the issues pertaining to ¹*one-place predicates* (e.g. *ya* (go)), *two-place predicates* (e.g. *luma* (bite)) and *three-place predicates* (*lomba* (lend)) becomes imperative (cf. 2.2 below for a detailed discussion). A lexical entry of each of these, indicating morphophonological features, categorial features, subcategorisation features and the theta grid will also be provided.

¹ These types of predicates are also referred to in other literature as *intransitive*, *monotransitive* and *ditransitive* verbs respectively.

The convention that will be adopted is from Du Plessis et al. (1995) and Chomsky (1981:37 & 48). For the predicate argument structure representation the symbols **x**, **y**, **z** will be used as is common practice in most linguistics circles. However, as variations occur in the convention for differentiating between external (subject) and internal (object) arguments, underlining, following Williams (1981) and his subsequent work, will be used to pick up the external argument, and round brackets will designate internal arguments. In each variable all these will be written within square brackets as $[x, (y, z)]$. Representative thematic structures will appear as for example, $[\underline{A}, Th]$ where A stands for Agent, the underlining indicating *external argument* and *Th* stands for *Theme* (cf. *dya* (eat) > $[\underline{A}, Th]$ which means that the verb *dya* (eat) subcategorizes for an external argument which is assigned an Agent theta role and an internal argument which is assigned a Theme role (more about theta roles in par. 2.3.1).

Furthermore, a brief explanation of the predication theory will be given, indicating how external arguments are assigned together with the issue of the VP internal subject hypothesis (cf. figure 7 on page 35 and figure 8 on page 36 below).

Thereafter an outline of verbs of change of possession will be given, including *give verbs* (e.g. *-nyika*, par. 2.2.3.1), *contribute verbs* (e.g. *-hlenga*, par. 2.2.3.2), *verbs of future having* (e.g. *-tshembisa*, par. 2.2.3.3), *verbs of providing* (e.g. *-humesa*, par. 2.2.3.4), *verbs of obtaining* (e.g. *-kuma*, par. 2.2.3.5) and *verbs of exchange* (e.g. *-cincisa*, par. 2.2.3.6). Only a few examples of each verb type will be given because each type will generally display the same predicate argument structure. For example, all *give verbs* in Xitsonga are ditransitive verbs and assign three arguments, e.g. *-nyika* (give) will have one external NP argument and two internal NP arguments. In all these cases further attention will be given to the internal arguments, discussing their changing syntactic positions.

Under lexical-semantic representation the fact that theta roles may be semantically interpreted will be delved into. A list of these theta roles will then be

provided (cf. par. 2.3.1), giving a definition of each together with an example sentence. I will also indicate that nouns may have various lexical features and I will then select those features that I will be concentrating on and present them in a schematic representation (figure 9 on page 62). Examples of relevant nouns with each of these features will also be given.

This discussion of noun features will be followed by an interpretation of the arguments of each of the verbs of change of possession, starting with the external argument, followed by the secondary internal argument and the primary internal argument. At the end of each list of applicable sentences, these verbs will be presented in tabular form indicating their [\pm animate] features. Each subject will then be interpreted accordingly.

The discussion will revolve broadly around two levels of representation namely the lexical-syntactic and the lexical-semantic representation.

Lexical-syntactic representation on the one hand, is based strictly on the syntactic relationship between the predicate and its arguments. In this case semantic relationships between the predicate and its arguments are not taken into consideration, i.e the theta roles are not specified according to semantic labels.

In the lexical-semantic representation on the other hand, the relationship in meaning between the predicate and its arguments is the main consideration. Here the semantic content of a specific theta role is mentioned.

2.2 Lexical-syntactic representation

The Predicate Argument Structure of a verb determines the number of arguments that appear with a verb. Generally the verb may appear with one, two or three arguments.

When a verb can appear with only one argument, it is described as a one-place predicate. Such verbs are usually intransitive verbs which cannot tolerate an object. This means that the verb assigns only one theta role to a subject NP as in the following example:

1. **Tatana** wa-hanana
 1father 1SC-generous
 (Father is generous)

The argument in example 1 above has only one corresponding variable, [x] (with the ²semantic label **theme**). This categorial feature may be indicated as follows, following Chomsky (1981:37) where # stands for a non-argument (cf. also Brown & Miller (1980:51) who describe # as “a symbol indicating a constituent boundary”):

2. *-hanan-* : Categorial type : [+V, -N]
 Subcategorization feature: [#]

Intransitive verbs such as motion verbs appear with locative phrases, e.g.

3. **Tatana** u-ya **exibedhlele**
 1father 1SC-go-PRS LOC-7hospital
 (Father goes to hospital)

In this case the predicate *ya* assigns two arguments, viz. the **agent** *Tatana* as external argument and the locative noun phrase *exibedhlele* as internal argument.

² A definition of each semantic label is given in paragraph 2.3.1.

When a verb subcategorizes for two arguments, it is referred to as a *two-place* predicate. According to the theta theory, transitive verbs have two theta roles, one of which is in the subject position and the other one in the object position of the verb, e.g.

4. **Nyoka yi-luma murisi**
 9snake 9SC-bite-PRS 1shepherd
 (The snake bites the shepherd)

This sentence can be lexically represented as follows:

Morphophonological feature	: -lum-
Categorial type	: [+V, +N]
Subcategorization feature	: [___ NP]
Theta-grid	: è1 è2

This argument structure has two variables \bar{x} (y) with the possible semantic interpretation of [**agent (patient)**] or [**A (Pat)**], which are also numbered è1 (theta 1) and è2 (theta 2) respectively.

There are also verbs which essentially subcategorize for three arguments, viz. one external (subject) argument and two internal (object) arguments. Accordingly these are referred to as *three-place* predicates or *ditransitive* verbs. Consider example 5a below (Note that although 5b-f are also relevant examples here, they will constitute a large part of our discussion under par. 2.2.2 where we deal with the internal arguments):

5. a. **Malume u-lomba hahani xigerho**
 1uncle 1SC-lend-PRS 1aunt 7scissors
 (Uncle lends aunt scissors)

- b. * Malume u-lomba **xigerho hahani**
 1uncle 1SC-lend-PRS 7scissors 1aunt
 (Uncle lends scissors aunt)
- c. Malume u-lomba **muchayeri mutirhi**
 1uncle 1SC-lend-PRS 1driver 7worker
 (Uncle lends the driver a worker)
- d. Malume u-lomba **mutirhi muchayeri**
 1uncle 1SC-lend-PRS 1worker 1driver
 (Uncle lends the worker a driver)
- e. Nsinya wu-nyika **swimilani ndzhuti**
 3tree 3SC-give-PRS 8plants 7shade
 (The tree gives plants a shade)
- f. *Nsinya wu-nyika **ndzhuti swimilani**
 3tree 3SC-give-PRS 7shade 8plants
 (The tree gives the shade plants)

In 5a the verb ³*lomba* assigns two theta roles to its complements *hahani* and *xigerho*. The semantic interpretation of these internal arguments is that *hahani* is the **recipient** while *xigerho* is the **theme**. The object which directly succeeds the verb is the secondary object whereas the one that comes last in the construction is the primary object. The lexical representation of the verb *lomba* is as follows, with three variables, viz. [$\underline{x}(y,z)$]:

Morphophonological feature: -lomb-
 Categorical feature : [+V, +N]
 Subcategorization feature : [___ NP NP]
 Theta-grid : θ_1 θ_2 θ_3

³ Some scholars may prefer to classify *kulomba* as a motion verb. Cf. Siteo (2001:17)

Example 5b is ungrammatical because the natural syntactic order in Xitsonga is to have the **beneficiary/ recipient** role adjacent to the verb. The Thematic Hierarchy Condition also renders 5b ungrammatical because **theme** is always ranked lower than **beneficiary/ recipient** in the hierarchy scale (cf. Jackendoff (1972:43), Grimshaw (1990:8) and Machobane (1989:48)).

The unacceptability of 5b could also be due to a restriction on the order of animate and inanimate NPs rather than on the requirement that the beneficiary object occupy the position immediately after the verb. Where an animate and an inanimate object appear together, the animate one is the one that always appears adjacent to the verb, otherwise the sentence becomes ungrammatical.

The explanation for the ungrammaticality of 5b may also be related to the discussion found in Bresnan and Moshi (1990:147) who distinguish two broad types of languages that allow multiple postverbal NP objects, viz. 'asymmetrical' and 'symmetrical' languages. In what they call the 'asymmetrical' object type only one of the postverbal NP's exhibits 'primary object' syntactic properties of *passivizability, object agreement, adjacency* to the verb and the like. Examples of this type of language include ⁴Kiswahili and Chichewa (Bresnan and Moshi, op.cit.).

In the 'symmetrical' object type language more than one NP can display 'primary object' syntactic properties. Examples of these are given by Bresnan and Moshi (op. cit.) and include ⁵Kinyarwanda, among others.

⁴ Kiswahili is a Bantu language spoken in East and Central Africa. Chichewa is also spoken in East Central Africa- particularly in Malawi and its neighbouring countries Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe, where it is also known as Chinyanja.

⁵ Kinyarwanda is also a Bantu language spoken in Rwanda.

Then, nearer home there are also symmetrical object languages in which asymmetries occur with subclasses of objects characterized by factors of *person* or *animacy*. Examples of these include ⁶Chishona and Sesotho. Alsina (1994) includes Siswati in this group. The syntactic behaviour of internal objects in Xitsonga resembles those of the languages in the 'symmetrical' group because it satisfies the adjacency criterion by allowing the primary object to take up its position immediately after the verb (cf. examples 5a-f); both objects have the ability to trigger object agreement (note that like Sesotho and Siswati (Alsina, 1994:153), Xitsonga does not allow two OMs to cooccur in a verb form (cf. example 15 below)) and both have the ability to take up the subject position in a passive sentence.

Following on the animacy principle, when there are two object NP's, the animate object precedes the inanimate one as in 5a. Alsina (1994:162) expresses the same opinion when he asserts, "This constraint referring to animacy provides an account of fixed order of object NPs only when the two elements being linearized differ in animacy" and then he poses a question, "what happens when the two object NPs are equal in animacy?"

If both arguments bear the feature [+animate], they can be used interchangeably as in 5c and 5d. Of course the syntactic variation is accompanied by a semantic change in these examples.

However, if both internal arguments bear a [-animate] feature, their order is fixed. The secondary or primary object argument takes its place adjacent to the verb as in 5e. When the order is reversed, it results in a starred form as in 5f.

In short, the Xitsonga examples here suggest that there is an interplay between syntactic and natural requirements for the ordering of objects in this language.

⁶ Chishona and Sesotho are Bantu languages spoken in Zimbabwe and Lesotho respectively.

2.2.1 The external argument

According to the predication theory, the NP argument which is assigned a theta role by the VP via predication must be outside the maximal projection of the verb. This NP argument in the subject position of the sentence, to which the verb assigns a theta role, is called the external argument. This argument is represented by [x] which represents the NP *Tatana* in example 3 above.

Although the external subject argument is outside the maximal projection of the VP, it is generated internally within the VP. The reason for this according to Du Plessis et al. (1995:2) is that the conditions for theta assignment prescribe that for the subject NP to receive a theta role, it must be in a sisterhood and also a mutual c-command relation with a VP (c-command specifies that node A c-commands node B if and only if

- (i) A does not dominate B and B does not dominate A: and
- (ii) The first branching node dominating A also dominates B.).

The example in 6a together with the diagram in figure 7 below show how the external NP argument is generated internally within the VP:

6. a. **Khamba** ri-yiva mali
 5thief 5SC-steal-PRS 9money
 (The thief steals money)
- b. [pro] ri-yiva mali
 5SC-steal-PRS 9money
 (S/he steals money)

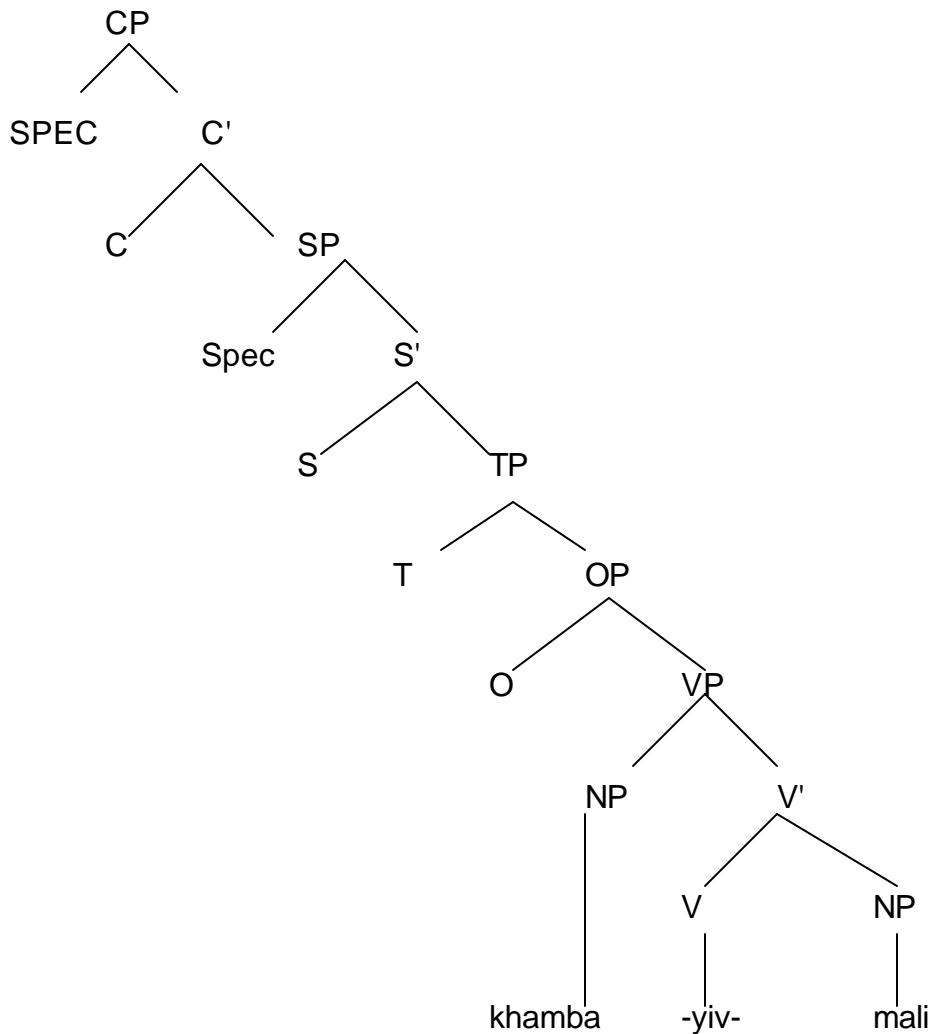


Figure 7: D-structure

The external argument *khamba* is generated within the VP and thus assigned a theta role by the VP. Via the rule Move á this argument NP has to move from this position. Similarly, the verb *yiva* (steal) as well as the internal argument NP *mali* (money) also has to be raised. The external NP argument has to be in a relation of mutual c-command with the maximal projection of the verb (VP) in order for it to receive a theta role. This process is referred to as the *VP internal subject hypothesis*. In the surface structure (cf. figure 8) this NP will then move to the SPEC position next to S which is now outside the maximal projection of the VP.

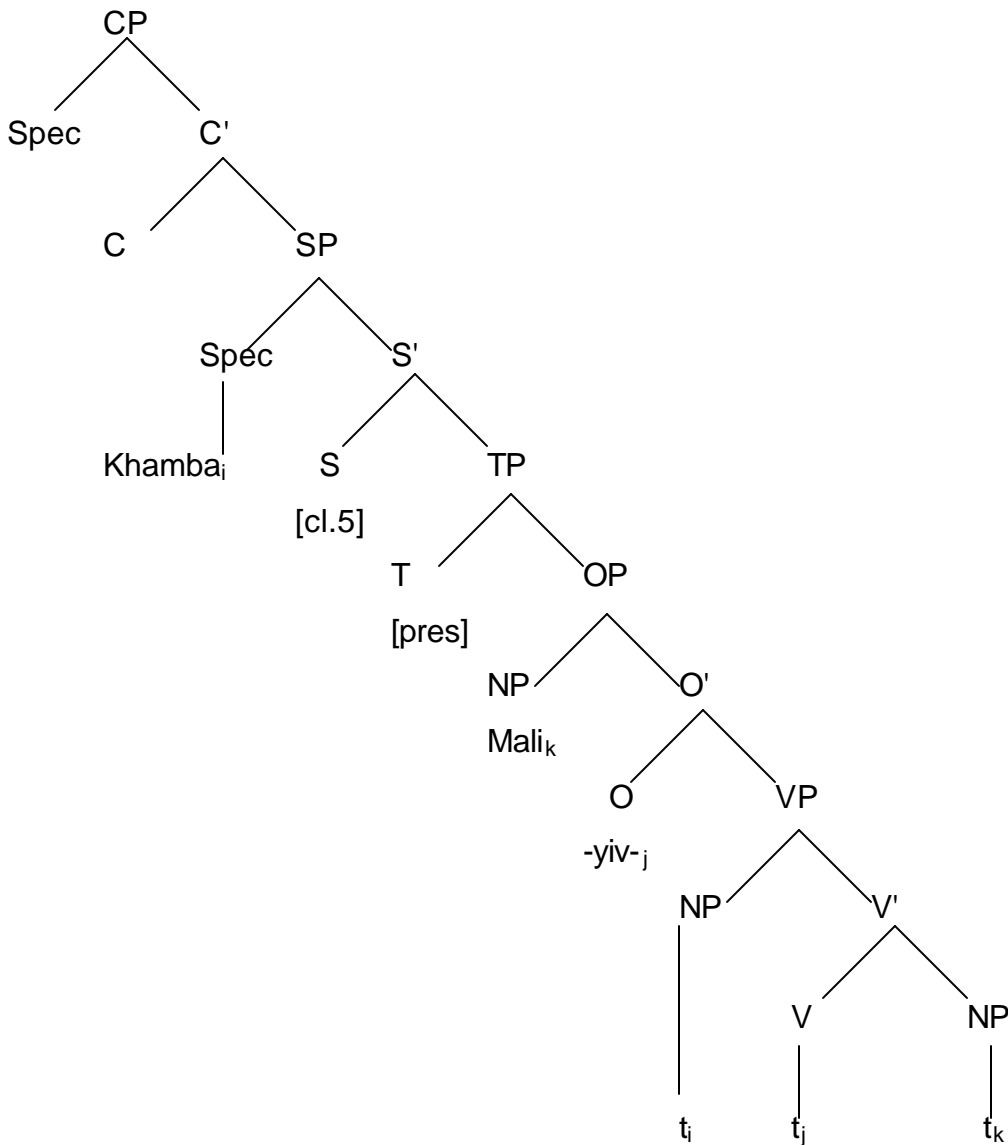


Figure 8: S-Structure

In this structure, the external NP *khamba* (thief), the verb *yiva* (steal) and the internal NP argument *mali* (money) have been raised. They have all left⁷ traces in the vacated positions which are indicated by t_i , t_j and t_k respectively. According to William (1994) cited by Mphigalale (1997:15), the relation between the subject

and the verb is obligatory. Every sentence must have an external NP argument and where such an argument is deleted, it must be represented with small pro with subjectival agreement as in 6b above, otherwise no complete meaning will be conveyed. Although we have by and by touched on some issues pertaining to the internal NP argument here, let us shed some more light on it.

2.2.2 The internal argument

The internal argument is an NP which appears in the position which is subcategorized by the verb. The internal arguments are assigned theta roles by the verb. These arguments appear as sisters to the verb which is the head within the VP.

The Bantu languages generally allow more than one postverbal NP object. As such, the verb subcategorises for two types of NP arguments, viz. primary and secondary NP arguments and theta role assignment takes place under government. These arguments can appear as bare NP objects as in example 5 above, or a bare NP and a locative as in example 7a below with the variables [\bar{x} (y,z)] and [\bar{x} (y, loc.z)] respectively.

7. a Vanhu va-hlenga **mali ekerekeni**
 2People 2SC-donate-PRS 9money LOC-9church
 (People donate money to the church)
- b. Vanhu va-hlenga **ekerekeni mali**
 2People 2SC-donate-PRS LOC-9church 9money
 (People donate to the church money)

⁷ In GB a *trace* is a putative empty category left behind in a particular location by the movement of some element out of that position. The use of a trace allows a tree to “remember” earlier stages of a derivation. (Trask, 1993:280).

In 7a above the internal arguments are *mali* and *ekerekeni*. The former (**theme**) is the primary argument whereas the latter (**location**) is the secondary argument. Unlike in our bizarre 5b, when the order of the internal arguments is reversed as in 7b, the sentence does not become ungrammatical. Rather, the locative NP is emphasized or brought under ⁸focus.

Let us now consider the various types of arguments in relation to the one class of verbs that we have chosen to deal with in this work, viz. the verbs of change of possession.

2.2.3 Verbs of change of possession

Verbs of change of possession refer to a sub-class of verbs in Xitsonga which express the meaning that something which was possessed by Y becomes possessed by Z. They fall into two types: *primitive* and *derived*.

By 'primitive' is meant those verbs that inherently express a sense of 'change of possession'. These are the type of verbs which require no morphological modification in order for them to express a sense of change of possession. The following are examples of primitive verbs: *nyika* (give), *ava* (distribute), *kolota* (owe), *siya* (leave), *hakela* (reward) and *hlayisa* (reserve). Note: the {-el-} in *hakela* and the {-is-} in *hlayisa* (reserve) should not be confused with the applicative and the causative suffix respectively because they are fossilised in the stem. When they are removed, the base verbs express a meaning that is etymologically unrelated to 'reward' and 'reserve'. Consider *hakela* > *haka* (hook) and *hlayisa* > *hlaya* (read/count).

⁸ Cf. Trask (1993:105) who mentions that in certain languages focus is achieved through word order. This issue will be discussed in some detail when we discuss the use of the object marker together with the 'object' that it refers to.

In contrast with primitive verbs, 'derived' verbs are those that have undergone morphological adjustments in order to be able to express change of possession. In this case, the base verb has been extended by the affixation of the causative {-is-}. The following are derived verbs of change of possession: *dyisa* (feed), *tlherisa* (return), *tshembisa* (promise), *humesa* (issue) and *cincisa* (exchange). Unlike their primitive counterpart, when the verbal affix {-is-} is removed from them, the base stem remains semantically related to the derived stem. Consider *dyisa* > *dya* (eat) and *tlherisa* > *tlhela* (return). Let us start with *give* verbs.

2.2.3.1 Give verbs

Give verbs are those verbs which express an action where something that is possessed by X is transferred to the possession of Y, i.e. somebody or something gives something to somebody or something else. All the give verbs in Xitsonga are ditransitive or three-place verbs. They assign three arguments (one subject NP and two object NPs) as in the following example:

- 8a. **Manana** u-nyika **mutirhi mali**
 1mother 1SC-give-PRS 1worker 9money
 (Mother gives the worker money)

As example 8a shows, in the predicate argument structure (PAS) of these verbs the external argument is assigned to the NP in the subject position and the internal arguments are assigned to the NPs in the object position with the variables [x (y,z)].

The [x] argument is assigned to *manana* which functions as the subject; the [y] argument to *mutirhi* and the [z] argument to *mali*, which are objects. The theta roles assigned are respectively [**agent, (recipient, theme)**]. The lexical entry of the verb *-nyika* (give) may be the following:

Morphophonological feature	: -nyik-
Categorial feature	: [+V, +N]
Subcategorisation feature	: [___ NP NP]
Theta-grid	: θ_1 θ_2 θ_3

Syntactically the internal objects appear in a certain order. The NP (object) which is [+human] must always be adjacent to the verb, otherwise the sentence becomes ⁹ungrammatical (refer to our discussion of example 5b), e.g.

- 8b. *Manana u-nyika **mali mutirhi**
 1mother 1SC-give-PRS 9money 1worker
 (Mother gives money worker)

However, these objects may be interchanged without any loss of grammaticality provided the object marker of the secondary object is incorporated in the predicate. In this instance the `object' with a [+human] feature becomes optional once it is replaced with an object marker, e.g.

- 8c. Manana u-**n'wi**-nyika mali (**mutirhi**)
 1mother 1SC-1OM-give-PRS 9money 1worker
 (Mother gives him/her money the worker)

According to Bresnan & Mchombo (1987:745) "The OM is unambiguously used for anaphoric agreement. In other words, it is not a grammatical agreement marker at all, but an incorporated object pronoun. From the uniqueness condition, it follows that an object NP can occur in the phrase structure only when OM is lacking."

This means that *mutirhi* in 8c should not even be labeled `object'. They view it as a floating NP which is linked to the discourse function of Topic.

However, although Poulos (1990:228) also maintains that the OM has anaphoric reference, he differs with the view of Bresnan & Mchombo (op.cit.) in that he asserts that the OM can be used together with the full 'object noun' after the verb for purposes of focus and emphasis to a certain degree.

Du Plessis et al. (1995:22) concur with Poulos (op.cit.) and assert: "This kind of co-occurrence of a lexical object with the object agreement morpheme is correlated with a specific semantic effect of emphasis which is absent when the lexical object is preceded by comma-intonation....It seems then as if structures ...with the clitic used together with a lexical object have to be dealt with within the broader framework of a theory of focus where (the object NP) is thus in a focus position."

The problem here is that the universal function of lexical items such as full NPs is to introduce new information while agreement markers (SC & OM) perform a syntactic function. Full pronouns are responsible for focus, contrast and emphasis.

These views must always be borne in mind when we discuss and analyse constructions in which the OM is incorporated in subsequent examples.

Furthermore, predicates with ditransitive verbs may appear with only one internal argument, the secondary object. The object *mali* (money) can be omitted without rendering the sentence ungrammatical. This happens only in a discourse context whereby both the speaker and the hearer know the surrounding circumstances of the conversation, e.g.

9. Manana u-nyika **mutirhi**
1mother 1 SC-give-PRS 1worker

⁹ Cf. Alsina (1994) and Bresnan and Moshi (1990) for a discussion of multiple objects. Also Machobane (1989:22).

(Mother gives the worker)

It is also possible to have the primary object appearing alone in the sentence, e.g.

10. Muchini wu-hakela **mali**
 3machine 3SC-pay-PRS 9money
 (The machine pays out money)

The object marker may also be ¹⁰coreferenced and in a ¹¹chain with an empty pronominal, e.g.

11. Manana u-**n'wi**-nyika [pro] mali.
 1mother 1SC-1OM-give-PRS [pro] 9money
 (Mother gives him/her money)

In this example, the OM is used unambiguously for anaphoric agreement, “It is not a grammatical agreement at all, but an incorporated object pronoun.” (Bresnan & Mchombo, 1987:745). Give verbs are closely related to contribute verbs which are next in our discussion. The only difference between them is that with contribute verbs the internal argument is a locative.

2.2.3.2 Contribute verbs

Contribute verbs are those verbs which express an action of giving help to a common cause or for a purpose. These verbs are monotransitive verbs with one primary object NP and a locative NP, e.g.

¹⁰ ‘Coreference’ is the relation which obtains between two NP’s (usually two NP’s in a single sentence) both of which are interpreted as referring to the same extralinguistic entity.

¹¹ “in a chain with” means that a trace of movement is coindexed with the NP that moved, to indicate that movement has occurred (cf. Sells, 1985:43). See also ‘path’ in Trask (1993:202).

- 12a. **Butana** u-hangalasa **mapapila enhlengeletanwini**
 1PN 1SC-distribute-PRS 6pamphlets LOC-9meeting
 (Butana distributes pamphlets in the meeting)

The PAS of contribute verbs is [x(y, loc.z)]. The [x] argument is assigned to the subject *Butana*; the [y] argument to the object *mapapila* and the [loc.z] to the locative *enhlengeletanwini*.

The normal word order of object followed by locative can be reversed in certain instances for the purpose of focus or emphasis (cf. the views expressed by Du Plessis et al. (1995) and Poulos (1990) in our discussion of example 8 above). For instance, if we wish to focus on the locative, the word order will be locative followed by object as in the following example:

- 12b. Butana u-hangalasa **enhlengeletanwini** mapapila
 1PN 1SC-distribute-PRS LOC-9meeting 6letters
 (Butana distributes in the meeting letters)

In this sentence, the object NP *mapapila* is used without the object marker. However, the object marker can also be incorporated in the predicate for focus or for emphasis, e.g.

- 13a. Butana u-**ma**-hangalasa enhlengeletanwini mapapila
 1PN 1SC-6OM-distributes-PRS LOC-9meeting 6letters
 (Butana distributes them in the meeting the letters)

The floating topic NP may be omitted without rendering the sentence ungrammatical. However, this only happens in a discourse context whereby both the speaker and the hearer know the surrounding circumstances of the conversation, e.g.

- 13b. Butana u-**ma**-hangalasa enhlengetanwini
 1PN 1SC-6OM-distributes-PRS LOC-9meeting
 (Butana distributes them in the meeting)

This class of verbs seems to have inherent goal or purpose which is expressed by the locative NP. The next group that we shall look at are verbs of future having.

2.2.3.3 Verbs of future having

Verbs of future having express a change of possession that will take place in the future, and they select two objects, e.g.

- 14a. Thicara u-kolota **vadyondzi tibuku**
 1teacher 1SC-owe-PRS 2students 10books
 (The teacher owes students books)

The PAS of these verbs is $[x (y,z)]$. The $[x]$ argument is assigned to the external argument Thicara; the $[y]$ argument is assigned to the secondary object *vadyondzi* and the $[z]$ argument to the primary object *tibuku*.

Syntactically, the normal order of the internal argument is that the secondary object comes first, i.e. immediately after the verb whereas the primary object comes last. In the example sentence above *vadyondzi* is the secondary object and *tibuku* is the primary object.

As in our example 5b when this syntactic order is reversed an ungrammatical sentence is constructed, viz.

- 14b. *Thicara u-kolota tibuku vadyondzi
 1teacher 1SC-owes-PRS 10books 2students

(The teacher owes books students)

This ungrammatical order can, however, be corrected by the inclusion of the object marker which indicates the respective coreferential object. As indicated in par. 2.2.2, Xitsonga can only have a single object marker at a time. In 15a below, the OM is used simultaneously with the secondary object *vadyondzi*:

15a. Thicara u-**va**-kolota tibuku **vadyondzi**
 1teacher 1SC- 2OM-owes-PRS 10books 2students
 (The teacher owes them books the students)

If the object marker is included which refers to the primary object *tibuku*, the primary object comes last in the construction, e.g.

15b. Thicara u-**ti**-kolota vadyondzi **tibuku**
 1teacher 1SC-10OM-owes-PRS 2students 10books
 (The teacher owes them to students the books)

These ditransitive verbs may also appear with only one internal argument, viz. the secondary object, e.g.

16a. Thicara u-kolota vadyondzi
 1teacher 1SC-owes-PRS 2students
 (The teacher owes the students)

It is also possible to have the primary object appearing alone, e.g.

16b. Thicara u-kolota **tibuku**
 1teacher 1SC-owes-PRS 10books
 (The teacher owes books)

The object marker, if included may also be coreferenced and in a chain with an empty pronominal, e.g.

- 16c. Thicara u-**va**-kolota [pro] tibuku
 1teacher 1SC-2OM-owes-PRS [pro] 10books
 (The teacher owes them books)

Again here, the views expressed by Bresnan & Mchombo (1987) and those of by Du Plessis et al.(1995) and Poulos (1990) must be borne in mind. Internal arguments can be replaced by their object markers. However, the occurrence of both OMs simultaneously is impossible. The next group that we shall look at are verbs of providing.

2.2.3.4 Verbs of providing

Verbs of providing express an action of availing something of necessity to someone or something else that does not have it. These verbs fall into two categories, verbs of **fulfilling** and verbs of **equipping**. We first deal with the verbs of fulfilling.

2.2.3.4.1 Verbs of fulfilling

According to Gropen et al. (1989) in Mphigalale (1997:21) verbs of fulfilling are those verbs where "X gives something to Y that Y deserves, needs, or is worthy of." These verbs normally appear with an external argument in the subject position and two internal arguments:

- 17a. Murimi u-yisa **mihandzu emakete**
 1farmer 1SC-supply-PRS 4fruit LOC-3market
 (The farmer supplies fruit to the market)

The PAS of these verbs is [\bar{x} (y, loc.z)]. The [\bar{x}] argument here is assigned to the subject **murimi**; the [y] argument to the object **mihandzu** and the [loc. z] argument to the locative [emakete].

The normal word order of the internal arguments is that the object is followed by the locative as in the example above. This sequence can, however, be reversed so that the locative precedes the topic NP. This can only happen when the object marker is incorporated in the predicate, e.g.

- 17b. Murimi u-**yi**-yisa **emakete mihandzu**
 1farmer 1SC-4OM-supply-PRS LOC-3market 4fruit
 (The farmer supplies it to the market the fruit)

In this instance focus is placed on the locative argument *emakete*.

The topic NP argument can also be omitted so that the sentence reads:

- 17c. Murimi u-**yi**-yisa emakete
 1farmer 1SC-4OM-supply-PRS LOC-3market
 (The farmer supplies it to the market)

The object marker may also be coreferenced and in a chain with an empty pronominal, e.g.

- 17d. Murimi u-**yi**-yisa [pro] emakete
 1farmer 1SC-4OM-supply-PRS LOC-3market
 (The farmer supplies fruit to the market)

The PAS of these verbs is similar to that of contribute verbs. They also behave the same in terms of incorporating the object marker. The examples here also

demonstrate that the OM is very influential in facilitating the exchange of places between the object arguments.

2.2.3.4.2 Equip verbs

After dealing with the first sub-category of fulfilling verbs, now we focus on the second type – equip verbs. These verbs are close in meaning to the verbs of fulfilling, but their meaning seems to specify something about what is provided rather than about the actual type of act of providing (Levin, 1993).

The PAS of these verbs differs from that of fulfilling verbs in that they appear with a prepositional phrase with **hi-** as head, e.g.

- 18a. Sejeni u-hlomisa masocha **hi tibomo**
 1sergeant 1SC-arms-PRS 6soldiers with 10bombs
 (The sergeant arms the soldiers with bombs)

The PAS of these verbs is [\underline{x} (y, hi z)]. The [\underline{x}] argument is assigned to *Sejeni*; the [y] argument to *masocha* and the [z] argument to *tibomo*.

The basic word order of the internal object is that it precedes the PP. It is possible to reverse this order and have the PP preceding the object. This, however, can be done only when the object marker is included in the predicate, e.g.

- 18b. Sejeni u-**ma**-hlomisa **hi tibomo masocha**
 1sergeant 1SC-6OM-arms-PRS with 10bombs 6soldiers
 (The sergeant arms them with bombs the soldiers)

Again it becomes clear from these examples that the OM plays a very significant role in the reversal or deletion of internal arguments. We can also see that verbs

of fulfilling behave the same syntactically as the verbs of equipping, hence they are grouped together under verbs of providing which act as the superordinate. Another category of verbs which takes a superordinate position is that of verbs of obtaining.

2.2.3.5 Verbs of obtaining

Verbs of obtaining are verbs which express a change of possession where X gains something from Y which Y loses possession of. Two types of verbs are distinguished in this category, viz. **get** verbs and **obtain** verbs.

2.2.3.5.1 Get verbs

These are verbs which express an action by which someone or something gets into their possession something that they lacked before. These verbs are basically monotransitive, assigning two arguments which are the external and the internal objects of the sentence, e.g.

19. **Khamba** ri-yiva **mbuti**
 5thief 5SC-steal-PRS 9goat
 (The thief steals a goat)

Their PAS is [x (y)]. The [x] argument is assigned to the subject *khamba* while the [y] argument is assigned to the object *mbuti*. This PAS is similar to that of give verbs.

2.2.3.5.2 Obtain verbs

Obtain verbs are verbs which express an action where someone or something secures something for oneself/itself from someone or something else. These verbs appear with the locative, e.g.

- 20a. **Xipanu** xi-hlengeleta **mathikithi eka vahlaleri**
 7team 7SC-collect-PRS 6tickets LOC-2spectators
 (The team collects tickets from the spectators)

Their PAS is [x (y, loc. z)]. The [x] argument is assigned to the subject *xipanu*; the [y] argument to the object *mathikithi* and the [loc. z] argument to the locative *eka vahlaleri*.

The word order of the internal argument can be reversed so that the locative precedes the object as follows:

- 20b. Xipanu xi-hlengeleta **eka vahlaleri mathikithi**
 7team 7SC-collect-PRS LOC-2spectators 6tickets
 (The team collects from the spectators tickets)

The object marker may also be included for emphasis, e.g.

- 20c. Xipanu xi-**ya**-hlengeleta **eka vahlaleri mathikithi**
 7team 7SC-6OM-collect-PRS LOC-2spectators 6tickets
 (The team collects them from the spectators the tickets)

These verbs behave the same with contribute verbs because they all have the locative NP in their structure. This is the reason why they are grouped together under the umbrella of verbs of obtaining.

2.2.3.6 Verbs of exchange

This category of verbs expresses an action of giving or receiving one thing in the place of another. In this relationship X loses to Y possession of something for which s/he gains possession of something else from Y in return. Verbs of

exchange are transitive and appear with a prepositional phrase with **hi-** as head, e.g.

- 21a. **Murimi** u-bindzurisile **nyimpfu hi sudu**
 1farmer 1SC-trade-PFT 9sheep for 9suit
 (The farmer traded a sheep for a suit)

Their PAS is [\underline{x} (y,hi z)]. [\underline{x}] is assigned to the external argument *murimi*; [\underline{y}] to the internal argument *nyimpfu* and [hi z] to the argument *hi sudu*.

The basic syntactic order of the predicate can be reversed from that of the [verb > object > PP] as in the example above to that of [verb > PP > object] as follows:

- 21b. **Murimi** u-**yi**-bindzurisile **hi sudu nyimpfu**
 1farmer 1SC-9OM-trade-PFT for 9suit 9sheep
 (The farmer traded it for a suit the sheep)

This syntactic order can only occur when the object marker is included in the predicate. The presence of the primary object is optional when the OM is included.

2.2.4 Summary

It is evident from this discussion that only lexical-syntactic factors were considered in the analysis of the PAS of the different verb types, i.e. the focus was on the syntactic relationships between the predicates and their arguments. The number of arguments as well as their distribution in a sentence are clearly determined by the predicate argument structure of the verb. Each sentence displays a certain basic syntactic structure which can be changed by certain syntactic demands. Among other things the following observations were made:

- ❖ Like in other languages, all give verbs in Xitsonga are ditransitive.
- ❖ Contribute verbs are monotransitive and may appear with a locative.

- ❖ Verbs of future having are ditransitive.
- ❖ Verbs of fulfilling are monotransitive and appear with a locative.
- ❖ Equip verbs are monotransitive and appear with a prepositional phrase with **hi-** as head.
- ❖ Under verbs of obtaining we find get verbs and obtain verbs. The former are monotransitive and the latter appear with a locative.
- ❖ Verbs of exchange are basically monotransitive and appear with a prepositional phrase with **hi-** as head.

Semantic relationships will be dealt with in the next sub-heading.

2.3 Lexical-semantic representation

Lexical-semantic representation is the representation in which the term thematic role may name a specific semantic relationship which an argument may bear to its predicate. In this case the semantic content of each specific theta role is mentioned. Jackendoff (1990), Rappaport and Levin (1986) and Zubizarreta (1987) also posit a theory which refers to lexical-semantic representation as Lexical Conceptual Structure (LCS) whose features are semantic labels. In the next paragraph it will be considered what these semantic labels are and how they may be interpreted.

2.3.1 Theta roles

Theta roles are usually used to refer to semantic roles that are assigned to the arguments by the verb in accordance with the requirements of the theta theory, such as **agent**, **patient**, **theme**, **beneficiary**, etc. As we have already seen, verbs select theta roles to build up their PAS. In the literature, theta roles are normally presented in a scale, ranging from **agent** to **instrument**, thus:

Agent > Benefactive > Experiencer > Goal > Theme > Locative > Instrument.

If for instance a verb has two arguments (one external and one internal) it will assign only two theta roles, e.g.

22. **Vahlengwe** va-kola **tihumba**

2Vahlengwe 2SC-gather-PRS 10tihumba

(The Vahlengwe people gather snails)

Vahlengwe will be assigned the theta role **agent** while *tihumba* will receive the theta role **patient**.

Different scholars have tried to provide lists of theta roles but many of them differ with regard to the specific number of roles which are present and how they are named. This view is supported by Sells (1985: 35) when he observes:

There is unfortunately no present available theory of what the range of possible roles is and how you might tell in a given context which one you are dealing with; one must rely on intuition in large part.

Trask (1993:278) supports this view when he asserts:

The proponents of GB have been remarkably unforthcoming about precisely which theta roles are posited in the framework, but at least Agent, Patient and Goal are generally recognized...

Although Dowty (1986:340) acknowledges the significance of the 'definitions' of thematic roles such as Agent, Patient, etc., he points out that these "will not take us very far toward an explicit theory of roles". He dismisses the 'credit' that Trask gives to GB proponents when he alleges that "no one that I know of has ever attempted to propose a complete list. There is disagreement even on the most familiar roles, e.g. whether Theme...is the same as Patient or distinct from it." (Dowty, 1986:548).

He then proposes three criteria of *completeness*, *distinctness* and *independence* for constructing a more “complete” and reliable system of constructing a thematic theory. (Dowty, 1986:346-347).

The different theta roles that scholars generally agree upon are the following (with definitions and appropriate Xitsonga examples):

2.3.1.1 Agent

The agent is the argument (person or animal) which initiates or instigates the action expressed by the predicate. According to Jackendoff (1972:32) “the agent NP is identified by a semantic reading which attributes to the NP “will” or “volition” toward the action expressed by the sentence. Hence only animate NPs can function as agents...”.

23. **Khamba** ri-yiva mali
 5thief 5SC-steal-PRS 9money
 (The thief steals money)

In this sentence the subject NP *khamba* intentionally initiates and performs the action of stealing and is thus assigned a theta role of agent. Agent is the most prominent theta role. That is why most sentences will have a subject (Subject condition in GB terms).

2.3.1.2 Patient

The patient is a person or thing which undergoes the action expressed by the predicate (and which is also affected by such action). Trask (op. cit.) points out that this role is often conflated with **theme**. Dowty (1986:340) asserts that this

role is borne by NP objects of verbs such as `kill', `eat' and `smash' **but not** those of `watch', `hear' and `love', e.g.

24. a. Nyankwawe u-yivile **vutomi** bya Jonasi
 1PN 1SC-steal-PFT 14life 14POSS 1PN
 (The shark stole Jonasi's life)
- b. Nereta yi-nga-nyika **miri** vuvabyi
 9syringe 9SC-POT-give-PRS 3body 14disease
 (A syringe can give the body a disease)

In these examples the object arguments *vutomi* (life) and *miri* (body) are assigned the theta role of **patient**. Though they are presented separately in this discussion, it should be pointed out that there is not yet a crystal clear distinction between **patient** and **theme**.

2.3.1.3 Theme

Theme is the person or thing which is in a state or condition (or which changes its state or condition) or an entity which is moved. If we apply the first part of the definition, that of a thing which is in a state or which changes its state, then *vutomi* (life) and *miri* (body) in 24a and 24b respectively qualify to be assigned the theta role of **theme** because *vutomi* changes from a state of life to that of lifelessness while *miri* changes from a state of health to that of illness. But if we take the last part of the definition, "an entity which is moved", the example below should be relevant:

25. Xihuhuri xi-tlherisela **malakatsa** endlwini
 7whirlwind 7SC-send-CAUS-APL-PRS 6dirt LOC-9house
 (The whirlwind sends back dirt to the house)

In this example, the argument **malakatsa** bears the **theme** role because it is the entity that is moved by the whirlwind. Dowty (op.cit.) gives examples with objects of 'give' and 'hand' as well as with the subject of 'walk'.

2.3.1.4 Experiencer

Dowty (1986:340) defines it as “a participant who is characterised as aware of something”. This theta role is assigned to the entity (person or animal) that experiences some psychological or physical state expressed by the predicate, e.g.

26. **Mbyana** ya-penga
 9Dog 9SC-mad- PRS
 (The dog is mad)

In this instance of the intransitive verb, the external argument **mbyana** has the theta role of experiencer because it experiences some mental state of madness.

2.3.1.5 Benefactive/ Beneficiary

This role is typically associated with the applicative {-el-} in Bantu languages, including Xitsonga. It applies to the entity which benefits from the action expressed by the predicate. Trask (op.cit.) observes that “it is sometimes conflated with **recipient** or with ¹²**goal** or both,” e.g.

27. Madumelani u-phahla **swikwembu**
 1PN 1SC-offer sacrifice-PRS 8gods
 (Madumelani offers sacrifice to the gods)

¹² The goal can also be conflated with the locative in sentences like, “The boys ran *towards the river*”.

The object NP argument *swikwembu* (gods) in this example is assigned a theta role of benefactive because it benefits from the action of offering.

2.3.1.6 Malefactive

The role of malefactive is the opposite of **benefactive** and is assigned to the internal argument regarded as an entity or person that is disadvantaged by the action expressed by the predicate, e.g.

28. Mudyondzisi u-tsona **n'wana** vutivi
 1teacher 1SC-deprive-PRS 1child 1knowledge
 (The teacher deprives the child knowledge)

The object argument *n'wana* (child) is assigned the role **malefactive** as it is clearly the child who is disadvantaged by the action of the teacher.

2.3.1.7 Goal

Goal is the entity towards which the activity expressed by the predicate is directed and which may be concrete or abstract. In contrast to **source**, it is an object to which motion proceeds, e.g.

29. Nhwanyana u-tlhakela **Muxiyi**
 1girl 1SC-elope-APL-PRS 1PN
 (The girl elopes to Muxiyi)

The verb *tlhakela* is a directional motion verb. It assigns the theta role of goal to the internal argument *Muxiyi*.

2.3.1.8 Source

Source is a semantic role borne by an argument that is regarded as an entity from which something is moved or from which motion takes place as a result of the activity expressed by the predicate, e.g.

30. **Mbanga** yi-mpfempfa ngati
 9wound 9SC-ooze-PRS 9blood
 (The wound oozes blood)

The argument *mbanga* is assigned the theta role of **source** because blood comes from it.

2.3.1.9 Location (or Locative)

Trask (1993:164) defines 'location' as "the semantic role borne by an NP which expresses the place in which something exists or occurs," e.g.

31. Marhambani u-xavisa mihandzu **emakete**
 1PN 1SC-deliver-PRS 4fruit LOC-3market
 (Marhambani sells fruit at the market)

2.3.1.10 Recipient

A recipient is a participant role borne by an entity (person/thing) which receives something as a result of the action expressed by the predicate. According to Crystal (1985:257) "it usually refers to the ANIMATE being passively implicated by the happening or state expressed by the verb," e.g.

32. Solani u-ha **vaendzi** swakudya
 1PN 1SC-give-PRS 2visitors 8food

(Solani gives visitors food)

However, some of our examples such as 39a and 43a prove that INANIMATE objects can also bear the recipient role. In 39a the *ntshava* (mountain) is the recipient of mist from the weather while in 43a *byanyi* (grass) receives the white colour from dew.

2.3.1.11 Purpose

Purpose is the entity (person or thing) which is the reason/purpose of action expressed by the predicate, e.g.

33. Xongi u-tirhela mali
 1PN 1SC-work-APL-PRS 9money
 (Xongi works for money)

The reason why Xongi works is because he wants money.

2.3.1.12 Instrument

An instrument is an entity or means by which something comes about. In Xitsonga, an argument which is assigned this theta-role is always preceded by the prepositional morpheme **hi-**, e.g.

34. Minki u-xenhula nyama **hi meno**
 1PN 1SC-bite-PRS 9meat with 6teeth
 (Minki bites meat with teeth)

2.3.1.13 Cause

Cause is the entity which causes something to happen as expressed by the predicate. Unlike the argument with an agent role, the argument that bears a cause role lacks “volition” or ‘will”, e.g.

35. **Nghotsa** yi-chulule byalwa
 9calabash 9SC-spill-PFT 14beer
 (The calabash has spilled beer)

It is clear from the foregoing definitions of thematic roles and their accompanying examples that they (theta roles) are inextricably bound with the arguments which are usually ¹³nouns. But then, verbs select the nouns/ pronouns they want to appear with according to their semantic features which may restrict their selection. This condition makes it imperative to consider some lexical characteristics of nouns.

2.3.2 Lexical features of nouns

Nouns may have various semantic features such as [concrete; number (singular/ plural); proper name; common noun; count noun; human/ animal; class gender, etc.]. It is imperative to sketch out these features for several reasons such as class gender, subcategorization and thematic role assignment.

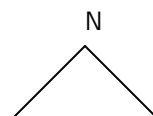
By class gender in this context is meant a “grammatical category found in certain languages by which nouns are divided into two or more classes requiring different agreement forms on determiners, adjectives, verbs or other words” (Trask,1993:115). As he observes, “there is usually some clear semantic basis

¹³ Such arguments may also be pronouns.

for the gender classes in a gender language, typically involving such obvious notions as size, shape, animacy, humanness...” etc. For instance in Xitsonga, as in several other Bantu languages, it is possible to predict the gender of a noun solely from its meaning. Thus a personal name like *Ximbani* automatically falls under class 1a while an abstract noun like *vutlhari* (wisdom) will group itself in class 14 (cf. table of Xitsonga class gender prefixes on page x).

Subcategorization is a phenomenon by which members of a single lexical category do not all exhibit identical syntactic behaviour but instead have different subcategorization requirements. For example a verb like *vona* (see) will subcategorize for an external argument which carries the feature [+animate] while it will restrict external arguments like *ndlala* (hunger) with the feature [-concrete].

Thematic relations are also an absolute necessity in the explanation of theta role assignment. For instance, the difference between the **agent** and **cause** roles is brought about by the strict requirement of a [+animate] feature in the former whereas the latter can exhibit a [+ or –animate] feature. Jackendoff (1972:32) asserts that “the **agent** NP is identified by a semantic reading which attributes to the NP will or volition toward the action expressed by the sentence. Hence only animate NPs can function as **agents**”. The features in figure 6 below are relevant:



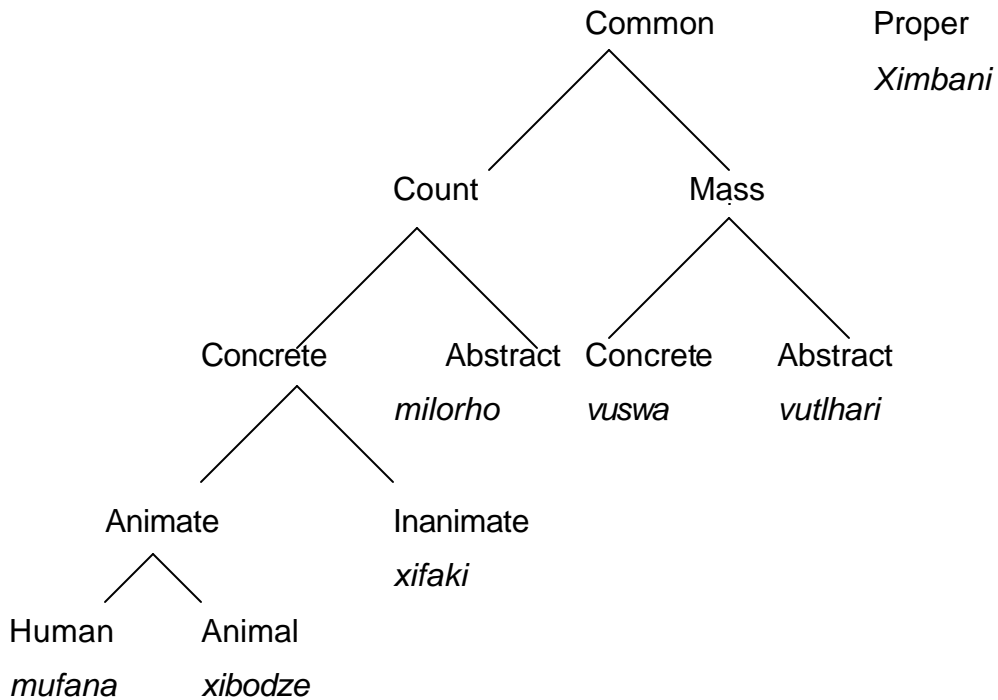


Figure 9: Some nominal lexical features

For example, the following nouns have (among others) the features that are listed against them:

36. a. *Ximbani* (personal name) = [proper noun; count; concrete; animate; human]
- b. *xifaki* (mealies) = [common; count; concrete; inanimate]
- c. *vutlhari* (wisdom) = [common; mass; abstract]
- d. *vuswa* (porridge) = [common; mass; concrete]
- e. *mufana* (boy) = [common; concrete; count; animate; human]

- f. *xibodze* (tortoise) = [common; concrete; count; animate; animal]
- g. *milorho* (dreams) = [common; count; abstract]

The two main features that will be put to the test in the interpretation of the arguments of the verbs of change of possession are [+animate] and [-animate]. Each verb type will be tested to determine whether it subcategorizes for arguments which carry these (and other) features.

2.3.3 Interpretation of the arguments of the verbs of change of possession

The approach followed in the interpretation of the arguments is as follows: Each verb type (e.g. **give** verbs) will be analysed separately. Firstly, a list of examples containing the type of verb will be provided, starting with those sentences whose external arguments have a **[+animate]** feature. When a verb cannot tolerate the argument, the ungrammaticality will be indicated with an asterisk. Secondly the list of sentences will be followed by a table in which the verbs and their semantic features are sketched out. This table will be followed by an interpretation of the external argument in accordance with the appropriate theta roles as defined in 2.3.1.

This discussion will then be followed by that of the internal arguments which will by and large follow the same pattern as that of the external arguments, followed by locative arguments when applicable.

2.3.4 Give verbs

2.3.4.1 The external argument

The external argument subcategorized by give verbs will appear in the subject position of the sentences below. All such arguments will bear [+animate] or [-animate] features:

[+animate]

37. a. **Wanuna** u-nyika wansati ntsako
1man 1SC-give-PRS 1woman 3joy
(The man gives the woman joy)
- b. **Ritlatla** u-ha n'wana xinkwa
1PN 1SC-give-PRS 1child 7bread
(Ritlatla gives the child bread)
- c. **N'wamabindzu** u lomba khamphani mali
1businessman 1SC-lend-PRS 9company 9money
(The businessman lends the company money)
- d. **Dosi** u-hakela vatirhi muholo
1PN 1SC-pay-PRS 2workers 3salary
(Dosi pays workers salary)
- e. **Tuva** ri-dyisa vondlo xivungu
5dove 5SC-feed-CAUS-PRS 5baby 7worm
(The dove feeds baby a worm)
- f. **Nghala** yi-phakela swinghalana nyama
9lion 9SC-distribute-APL-PRS 8lions-DIM 9meat
(The lion distributes meat to baby lions)

The external argument is [-animate] in the following instances where four different arguments are considered, viz. *nsinya*, *maxele*, *mpfula* and *nyimpi*.

[-animate]

38. Nsinya

- a. **Nsinya** wu-nyika swimilani ndzhuti
3tree 3SC-give-PRS 8plants 3shade
(The tree gives plants shade)
- b. **Nsinya** wu-hakela vanhu mihandzu
3tree 3SC-pay-PRS 2people 4fruit
(The tree pays people fruit)
- c. **Nsinya** wu-dyisa vanhu mihandzu
3tree 3SC-feed-CAUS-PRS 2people 4fruit
(The tree feeds people fruit)
- d. **Nsinya** wu-phakela vanhu mihandzu
3tree 3SC-distribute-APL-PRS 2people 4fruit
(The tree distributes fruit to people)
- e. **Nsinya** wu-ha vanhu mihandzu
3tree 3give-PRS 2people 4fruit
(The tree gives people fruit)
- f. **Nsinya** wu-lomba murimi mihandzu
3tree 3SC-lend-PRS 1farmer 4fruit
(The tree lends the farmer fruit)

39. Maxele

- a. **Maxele** ya-nyika ntshava nkungwa
6weather 6SC-give-PRS 9mountain 3mist
(The weather gives the mountain mist)
 - b. **Maxele** ya-ha vanhu mukhuhlwani
6weather 6SC-give-PRS 2people 3flu
(The weather gives people flu)
 - c. ***Maxele** ya-lomba vanhu xirhami
6weather 6SC-lend-PRS 2people 7cold
(The weather lends people cold)
 - d. ***Maxele** ya-hakela vanhu mukhuhlwani
6weather 6SC-pay-PRS 2people 3flu
(The weather pays people flu)
 - e. **Maxele** ya-dyisa vanhu ritshuri
6weather 6SC-feed-CAUS-PRS 2people 5dust
(The weather feeds people dust)
 - f. ***Maxele** ya-phakela vanhu xirhami
6weather 6SC-serve-APL-PRS 2people 7cold
(The weather distributes people cold)
40. **Mpfula**
- a. **Mpfula** yi-nyika swimilani vutomi
9rain 9SC-give-PRS 8plants 14life
(Rain gives plants life)
 - b. **Mpfula** yi-nyika vanhu swakudya

9rain 9SC-give-PRS 2people 8food
(Rain gives people food)

- c. **Mpfula** yi-ha swimilani timinerali
9rain 9SC-give-PRS 8plants 10minerals
(Rain gives plants minerals)
- d. **Mpfula** yi-lomba vana nkarhi wo huhwa
9rain 9SC-lend-PRS 2children 3time of play
(Rain lends children time to play)
- e. **Mpfula** yi-dyisa vanhu matsavu
9rain 9SC-feed-CAUS-PRS 2people 6vegetables
(Rain feeds people vegetables)
- f. **Mpfula** yi-phakela matiko mati
9rain 9SC-distribute-APL-PRS 6countries 6water
(Rain distributes water to countries)

41. **Nyimpi**

- a. **Nyimpi** yi-hakela vanhu vusiwana
9war 9SC-pay-PRS 2people 14poverty
(War pays people poverty)
- b. **Nyimpi** yi-ha vanhu rivengo
9war 9SC-give-PRS 2people 5hatred
(War gives people hatred)
- c. **Nyimpi** yi-dyisa vanhu ndlala
9war 9SC-feed-CAUS-PRS 2people 9hunger

(War feeds people hunger)

- d. **Nyimpi** yi-phakela masocha swiphanghiwa
 9war 9SC-distribute-APL-PRS 6soldiers 8spoils
 (War distributes spoils to soldiers)
- e. **Nyimpi** yi-lomba vavanuna swibamu
 9war 9SC-lend-PRS 2men 8guns
 (War lends men guns)

Table 1: The external argument

Verbs	+Animate	-Animate
nyika (give)	+	+
ha (give)	+	+
lomba (lend)	+	+
hakela (pay)	+	+
dyisa (feed)	+	+
phakela (distribute)	+	+

Interpretation of the external argument

When the subject argument has the feature [+animate], one may notice that all the *give* verbs will accept such an external argument. In such instances the subject argument may have the following interpretations:

- a. In the sentence “*Ritlatla* u ha n’wana xinkwa” (example 37b), *Ritlatla* is the initiator of the action expressed by the verb *ha*. Since this action is accompanied by ‘volition’, *Ritlatla* may be interpreted as the **agent**, a role which is generally ranked as the highest in the hierarchy scale. However,

- this animate subject may also be interpreted as **source**, i.e. *Ritlatla* is the abstract 'place' from which the child gets some bread.
- b. It is also possible for one to change the primary object to an abstract noun as in "*Wanuna u-nyika wansati ntsako*" (example 37a).
In this case the primary object is *ntsako* and it has the feature [+**abstract**]. In such a case the subject argument *wanuna* may be interpreted as **cause**, i.e. the reason why the woman is happy is because the man gives her joy. The man is thus the person that makes something happen.

However, when the subject argument has the feature [-animate], a problem arises with the type of inanimate subject: In our example sentences above only three verbs will accept *maxele* as subject, viz. *nyika*, *ha* and *dyisa*. Otherwise, all the other inanimate subjects are acceptable with the give verbs and will have a reading of **cause/source**.

2.3.4.2 The secondary internal argument

The secondary internal argument will appear in the object position of the sentences below, following immediately after the verb. Such arguments occur with both [+animate] and [-animate] features.

42. [+animate]

- a. Muxe u-nyika **n'wana** buku
1PN 1SC-give-PRS 1child 9book
(Muxe gives the child a book)
- b. Manana u-ha **vaendzi** swakudya
1mother 1SC-give-PRS 2visitors 8food
(Mother gives visitors food)
- c. Muhehi u-lomba **vafana** focholo

1PN 1SC-lend-PRS 2boys 9shovel
(Muhehi lends the boys a shovel)

- d. Mulungu u-hakela **mutirhi** mali
1employer 1SC-pay-PRS 1worker 9money
(The employer pays the worker money)
- e. Kokwana u-dyisa **ntukulu** mihandzu
1granny 1SC-feed-CAUS-PRS 1grandchild 4fruit
(Granny feeds grandchild fruit)
- f. Kaputeni u-phakela **vatlangi** swiambalo
1captain 1SC-distribute-APL-PRS 2players 8clothes
(The captain distributes clothes to the players)
43. [-animate]
- a. Mberha yi-nyika **byanyi** muhlovo wo basa
9dew 9SC-give-PRS 14grass 3colour POSS-white
(Dew gives grass white colour)
- b. Hleki u-ha **tafula** ntirho
1PN 1SC-give-PRS 5table 3work
(Hleki gives the table work)
- c. Vusiku byi-lomba **nhlekani** ku vonakala
14night 14SC-lend-PRS 3day 15brightness
(Night lends the day brightness)
- d. Mpfula yi-dyisa **misava** mati
9rain 9SC-feed-CAUS-PRS 4soil 6water
(Rain feeds soil water)

- e. Dyambu ri-phakela **matiko** rivoningo
 5sun 5SC-distribute-APL-PRS 6countries 5light
 (The sun distributes light to countries)

Table 2: The secondary internal argument

Verbs	+Animate	-Animate
nyika (give)	+	+
ha (give)	+	+
lomba (lend)	+	+
hakela (pay)	+	+
dyisa (feed)	+	+
phakela (distribute)	+	+

Interpretation of secondary internal argument

When the secondary internal argument has the [+animate] feature, it can appear as an object of all the give verbs. This argument may be interpreted semantically as the **recipient** because in the sentence below *n'wana* receives a book from the subject, e.g.

44. Muxe u-nyika **n'wana** buku
 1PN 1SC-give-PRS 1child 9book
 (Muxe gives the child a book)

Alternatively it may be interpreted as **benefactive** because *n'wana* benefits from the action of 'giving'.

It can further be interpreted as **malefactive** when it is disadvantaged by the action which is expressed by the verb. Consider example 45 below, where *wanuna* is disadvantaged by the act of giving:

45. Wansati u-nyika **wanuna** vuvabyi
 1woman 1SC-give-PRS 1man 1disease
 (The woman gives the man a disease)

A semantic interpretation of **source** is also possible because *wansati* is regarded as the source or place where the disease comes from.

2.3.4.3 The primary internal argument

The primary internal argument is that argument which undergoes the action expressed by the predicate directly. It normally succeeds the secondary object in a construction. It may appear with both [+animate] and [-animate] features.

46. **[+animate]**
- a. Wanuna u-nyika wansati **n'wana**
 1man 1SC-give-PRS 1woman 1child
 (The man gives the woman a child)
- b. Manana u-ha muendzi **huku**
 1mother 1SC-give-PRS 1visitor 9chicken
 (Mother gives the visitor a chicken)
- c. Mufana u-lomba munghana **mbhongolo**
 1boy 1SC-lend-PRS 1friend 9pony
 (The boy lends a friend a pony)

- d. Muvabyi u-hakela n'anga **mbuti**
1patient 1SC-pay-PRS 9doctor 9goat
(The patient pays the doctor a goat)
 - e. Jenny u-dyisa ximanga **kondlo**
1PN 1SC-feed-CAUS-PRS 7cat 5mouse
(Jenny feeds the cat a mouse)
 - f. Murisi u-phakela vafana **tihomu**
1shepherd 1SC-distribute-APL-PRS 2boys 10cattle
(The shepherd distributes cattle to the boys)
47. **[-animate]**
- a. Butana u-nyika movabyi **mihandzu**
1PN 1SC-give-PRS 1patient 4fruit
(Butana gives the patient fruit)
 - b. Sasi u-ha Siza **xinkwa**
1PN 1SC-give-PRS 1PN 7bread
(Sasi gives Siza bread)
 - c. Molefe u-lomba Rhulani **xikanyakanya**
1PN 1SC-lend-PRS 1PN 9bicycle
(Molefe lends Rhulani a bicycle)
 - d. Hlamalani u-hakela mutirhi **muholo**
1PN 1SC-pay-PRS 1worker 3salary
(Hlamalani pays the worker salary)
 - e. Wansati u-dyisa nuna **thyaka**
1woman 1SC-feed-CAUS-PRS 1man 5rubbish

(The woman feeds the man rubbish)

- f. Malume u-phakela maxaka **swifaki**
 1uncle 1SC-distribute-APL-PRS 6relatives 8mealies
 (Uncle distributes mealies to relatives)

Table 3: The primary internal argument

Verbs	+ Animate	-Animate
nyika (give)	+	+
ha (give)	+	+
lomba (lend)	+	+
hakela (pay)	+	+
dyisa (feed)	+	+
phakela (distribute)	+	+

These verbs can take a primary internal argument with the feature [+animate] or [-animate].

Interpretation of primary internal arguments

The primary internal argument is semantically interpreted as **theme** because it is that entity which is moved in the sense that it changes possession from the subject to the object, e.g.

48. Manana u-ha muendzi **huku**
 1mother 1SC-give-PRS 1visitor 9chicken
 (Mother gives the visitor a chicken)

The result of this action is that *huku* is now in the possession of *muendzi* and no longer of *manana*. It may also have the reading of **patient** because *huku*

undergoes the action expressed by the predicate directly and is also affected by it.

2.3.5 Contribute verbs

2.3.5.1 The external argument

The external argument of contribute verbs normally occupies subject position in a sentence and occurs with both [+ and –animate] features. The external argument is [+animate] in the following sentences:

49. [+animate]

- a. **Mukhalabye** u-hlenga mali exikolweni
1old man 1SC-contribute-PRS 9money LOC-7school
(The old man contributes money to school)
- b. **Thicara** u-ava mintirho etlilasini
1teacher 1SC-distribute-PRS 4work LOC-9class
(The teacher distributes work in the class)
- c. **Murhangeri** u-tlherisa tibuku elayiburari
1leader 1SC-return-CAUS-PRS 10books LOC-9library
(The leader returns books to the library)
- d. **Mafemani** wa-phahla egandzelweni
1PN 1SC-sacrifice-PRS LOC-9altar
(Mafemani sacrifices for the gods at the altar)
- e. **Khamba** ri-pambula mali epheseni
5thief 5SC-pick-PRS 9money LOC-9purse
(The thief picks money from the purse)

The external argument is [-animate] in the following instances:

50. [-animate]

- a. **Xihuhuri** xi-hlengeleta maphepha erihlampfini
7whirlwind 7SC-gather-PRS 6papers LOC-5fence
(The whirlwind gathers papers on the fence)

- b. **Moya** wu-hangalasa mapapila etindlwini
3wind 3SC-distribute-PRS 6letters LOC-10houses
(The wind distributes letters in the houses)

- c. **Damu** ri-ava mati emilambyeni
5dam 5SC-distribute-PRS 6water LOC-4rivers
(The dam distributes water to the rivers)

- d. **Xihuhuri** xi-tlherisa malakatsa endlwini
7whirlwind 7SC-send-CAUS-PRS 6dirt LOC-9house
(The whirlwind sends back dirt to the house)

- e. **Rifu** ri-pambula n'wana emutini
5death 5SC-pick out-PRS 1child LOC-3family
(Death picks out a child in the family)

Table 4: The external argument

Verbs	+Animate	-Animate
hlenga (contribute)	+	+
ava (distribute)	+	+
tlherisa (return)	+	+
phahla/luva (sacrifice)	+	-
pambula (pick)	+	+
hengeleta (gather)	+	+

Interpretation of external argument

When the external argument has a [+animate] feature, all the contribute verbs accept it without a problem. The animate external argument may have the following semantic interpretations:

Since 'will' is involved in performing the action expressed by the verb, *mukhalabye* may be interpreted as an **agent** (cf. example 49a). A semantic reading of **source** is also possible because *mukhalabye* is that entity from which the school gets money. *Mukhalabye* can also be given the semantic label **cause** because the reason why the school has money is because he contributes.

When the subject argument has the feature [-animate] it is generally interpreted as **cause** because it initiates the action expressed by the predicate, e.g. *xihuhuri xi hengeleta maphepha erihlampfini* (example 50a). However some contribute verbs do not accept such an argument. Consider the verbs *phahla* and *luva* below:

51. ***Moya** wu-phahla swikwembu emasirheni
3wind 3SC-offer sacrifice-PRS 8ancestors LOC-6graves

(The wind offers sacrifice to ancestors at the graves)

52. ***Dyambu** ri-luva hosi exiluveweni

5sun 5SC-offer sacrifice-PRS 9king LOC-7place where king sits

(The sun offers sacrifice to the king where king sits)

However, arguments such as *fole* (snuff) and *byalwa* (liquor) (and other entities which are sacrificed to the gods) can occur with these verbs, e.g. *byalwa/fole ra phahla swikwembu egandzelweni* (liquor/snuff can be used as sacrifice to the gods at the altar).

2.3.5.2 Internal argument

The primary internal argument comes immediately after the verb in a construction. The internal argument can have both [+animate] and [-animate] features. The arguments are [+animate] in the following examples:

53. **[+animate]**

a. Thicara u-hlengelela **vana** exikolweni

1teacher 1SC-assemble-PRS 2children LOC-7school

(The teacher assembles children at school)

b. Ndzawulo yi-hangalasa **vadyondzisi** eswikolweni

9department 9SC-distribute-PRS 2teachers LOC-8schools

(The Department distributes teachers to schools)

c. Muleteri u-ava **vatsutsumi** eswipanwini

1trainer 1SC-distribute-PRS 2athletes LOC-8teams

(The trainer distributes athletes to teams)

d. Vakokwana va-phahla **swikwembu** egandzelweni

2grannies 2SC-sacrifice-PRS 8gods LOC-5altar
(Grannies sacrifice for gods at altar)

- e. Valungu va-pambula **vachayeri** efemeni
2employers 2SC-pick-PRS 2drivers LOC-9firm
(Employers pick drivers in the firm)
- f. Kokwana u-hlenga **tihuku** enkhubyeni
1granny 1SC-contribute-PRS 10chickens LOC-3wedding
(Granny contributes chickens to the wedding)

54. [-animate]

- a. Manana u-hlenga **matsavu** enkhubyeni
1mother 1SC-contribute-PRS 6vegetables LOC-3party
(Mother contributes vegetables to the party)
- b. Murimi u-hlengeta **makwembe** ensin'wini
1farmer 1SC-gather-PRS 6pumpkins LOC-9field
(The farmer gathers pumpkins in the field)
- c. Mutirhi u-hangalasa **swirhambo** emitini
1worker 1SC-distribute-PRS 8invitations LOC-4families
(The worker distributes invitations to families)
- d. Gembetela u-ava **masaka** etilorini
1PN 1SC-distribute-PRS 6bags LOC-10lorries
(Gembetela distributes bags to the lorries)
- e. Vahirhi va-pambula **tihovorolo** efemeni
2workers 2SC-pick-PRS 10overalls LOC-9firm
(The workers pick overalls in the firm)

- f. Vavanuna va-phahla **xifaniso** entshaveni
 2men 2SC-sacrifice-PRS 7picture LOC-9mountain
 (Men sacrifice for a picture in the mountain)

Table 5: The primary internal argument

Verbs	+Animate	-Animate
hlenga (contribute)	+	+
hlengeleta (assemble)	+	+
hangalasa (distribute)	+	+
ava (distribute)	+	+
phahla (sacrifice)	+	+
pambula (pick)	+	+

Interpretation of the primary internal argument

The [+animate] arguments are semantically interpreted as **patient** because they undergo the action expressed by the predicate, e.g.

55. Thicara u-hlengeleta **vana** exikolweni
 1teacher 1SC-assemble-PRS 2children LOC-7school
 (The teacher assembles children at school)

An interpretation of **theme** is also possible in this example as children are 'moved' from different places to be gathered in one place.

Interpretation of the locative argument

The locative argument is assigned a thematic role of **goal** because the activity expressed by the predicate is directed towards it, e.g.

56. Ndzawulo yi-hangalasa vadyondzisi **eswikolweni**
 9department 9SC-distribute-PRS 2teachers LOC-8schools
 (The Department distributes teachers to schools)

The semantic label **location** is also appropriate here because **eswikolweni** is the place at which the action expressed by the predicate *hangalasa* (distributes) is performed.

2.3.6 Verbs of future having

2.3.6.1 External argument

The external argument of these verbs appears in the subject position in the sentence. All such subjects can occur with animate and inanimate features as in the examples that follow:

57. **[+animate]**
- a. **Wanuna** u-tshembisile wansati nyiko
 1man 1SC-promise-CAUS-PFT-1woman 9gift
 (The man promised the woman a gift)
- b. **Xitlhangoma** u-kolota hahani duku
 1PN 1SC-owe-PRS 1aunt 5headcloth
 (Xitlhangoma owes aunt a headcloth)

- c. **Phorisa** ri-rihisile muchayeri R500
5policeman 5SC-fine-CAUS-PFT 1driver R500
(The policeman fined the driver R500)
- d. **Hosi** yi-tiyisisile valanguteri ntirho
9king 9SC-guarantee-INTSV-PFT 2guards 3work
(The king guaranteed the guards work)

In the following example, the external argument has a [-animate] feature:

58. **[-animate]**

- a. **Xikolo** xi-tshembisile wanuna ntirho
7school 7SC-promise-CAUS-PFT 1man 3job
(The school promised the man a job)
- b. **Yindlu** yi-kolota kamara tinhundzu
9house 9SC-owe-PRS 5bedroom 10furniture
(The house owes the bedroom furniture)
- c. **Mfumo** wu-kolota vaaki tiyindlu
3government 3SC-owe-PRS 2citizens 10houses
(The government owes the citizens houses)
- d. **Huvo** yi-rihisile mudlayi homu
9court 9SC-fine-CAUS-PFT 1murderer 9cow
(The court fined the murderer a cow)
- e. **Xitimela** xi-tiyisisile vakhandziyi rendzo
7train 7SC-guarantee-INTSV-PFT 2passengers 5trip
(The train guaranteed the passengers a trip)

Table 6: The external argument

Verbs	+Animate	-Animate
tshembisa (promise)	+	+
kolota (owe)	+	+
rihisa (fine)	+	+
tiyisisa (guarantee)	+	+

Interpretation of the external argument

Whether the subject argument has a [+animate] or [-animate] feature, all verbs of future having will accept such an external argument.

The semantic interpretation of the argument is that of **agent**, not only in the case of [+animate] arguments, but also in the case of those with [-animate] features because they are personalised.

The external argument may also be interpreted as a **source** because it is by the man and the government that the action expressed by the verb must be fulfilled in future, i.e. the gift will come from the man and the houses from the government in 57a and 58c above.

2.3.6.2 Secondary internal argument

Normally this argument appears immediately after the verb. This internal argument can have a [+animate] or [-animate] feature as in the following examples:

59. [+animate]

- a. Malume u-tshembisile **Majaji** movha
1uncle 1SC-promise-CAUS-PFT 1PN 3car

(Uncle promised Majaji a car)

- b. Mufambi u-kolota **mufana** R30
1traveller 1SC-owe-PRS 1boy R30
(The traveller owes the boy R30)
- c. Murimi u-rihisile **makhamba** timbuti timbirhi
1farmer 1SC-fine-CAUS-PFT 6thieves 10goats two
(The farmer fined the thieves two goats)
- d. Hosi yi-tiyisisile **valanguteri** ntirho
9king 9SC-guarantee-INTSV-PFT 2guards 3work
(The king guaranteed the guards work)

The following are examples of the secondary argument with a [-animate] feature:

60. [-animate]

- a. Wanuna u-tshembisile **movha** oyili
1man 1SC-promise-CAUS-PFT 3car 9oil
(The man promised the car oil)
- b. Muaki u-kolota **yindlu** pende
1builder 1SC-owe-PRS 9house 9paint
(The builder owes the house paint)
- c. Mufambi u-rihisile **hodela** byetlelo
1traveller 1SC-fine-CAUS-PFT 9hotel 14accommodation
(The traveller fined the hotel accommodation)
- d. Garaji yi-tiyisisile **movha** mathayere
9garage 9SC-guarantee-INTSV-PFT 3car 6tyres

(The garage guaranteed the car tyres)

Table 7: The secondary internal argument

Verbs	+Animate	-Animate
tshembisa (promise)	+	+
kolota (owe)	+	+
rihisa (fine)	+	+
tiyisisa (guarantee)	+	+

Interpretation of the secondary internal argument

Whether the secondary internal argument has a [+animate] or [-animate] feature, it can be interpreted as the **recipient** because it is the one that will receive the entity referred to by the primary object.

Furthermore, depending on whether the action expressed by the predicate is good or bad news, the secondary internal argument can be labelled **benefactive** or **malefactive** respectively. Consider, e.g.

- 61a. Malume u-tshembisile **Majaji** nyiko
 1uncle 1SC-promise-CAUS-PFT 1PN 9present
 (Uncle promised Majaji a present)

In the example above it is benefactive because *Majaji* is expecting a 'present'. However, in a sentence such as the following, *Majaji* is malefactive:

- 61b. Malume u-tshembisile **Majaji** rifu
 1uncle 1SC-promise-CAUS-PFT 1PN 5death
 (Uncle promised Majaji death)

2.3.6.3 Primary internal argument

The primary internal argument normally appears at the end of a sentence, succeeding the secondary argument. This argument can occur with a [+animate] or [-animate] feature without problems as in the following examples:

62. [+animate]

- a. Murisi u-tshembisile vahloti **homu**
1shepherd 1SC-promise-CAUS-PFT 2hunters 9ox
(The shepherd promised the hunters an ox)
- b. Cosmos yi kolota Chiefs **mutlangi**
9PN 9SC-owe-PRS 9PN 1player
(Cosmos owes Chiefs a player)
- c. Murimi u-rihisile makhamba **timbuti**
1farmer 1SC-fine-CAUS-PFT 6thieves 10goats
(The farmer fined the thieves goats)
- d. Mukhegula u-tiyisisile wanuna **nsati**
1old lady 1SC-guarantee-INTSV-PFT 1man 1wife
(The old lady guaranteed the man a wife)

The examples that follow have a primary argument with a [-animate] feature:

63. [-animate]

- a. Makhantikhi u-tshembisile movha **oyili**
1mechanic 1SC-promise-CAUS-PFT 3car 9oil
(The mechanic promised the car oil)

- b. Muaki u-kolota yindlu **rivanti**
 1builder 1SC-owe-PRS 9house 5/11door
 (The builder owes the house a door)
- c. Hosi yi-rihisile noyi **tshuri**
 9chief 9SC-fine-CAUS-PFT 1witch 5mealie mortar
 (The chief fined the witch a mealie mortar)
- d. Socha ri-tiyisisile nala **ntirhisano**
 5soldier 5SC-guarantee-INTSV-PFT 1enemy 3co-operation
 (The soldier guaranteed the enemy co-operation)

Table 8: The primary internal argument

Verbs	+Animate	-Animate
tshembisa (promise)	+	+
kolota (owe)	+	+
rihisa (fine)	+	+
tiyisisa (guarantee)	+	+

Interpretation of primary internal argument

In the example below, [homu] is the primary internal argument with a [+animate] semantic feature:

64. Murisi u-tshembisile vahloti **homu**
 1shepherd 1SC-promise-CAUS-PFT 2hunters 9ox
 (The shepherd promised the hunters an ox)

The argument can be interpreted as **patient** because it undergoes the action expressed by the predicate and is also affected by it.

Again, depending on whether it is affected positively or negatively, it will be labelled **benefactive** or **malefactive**. *Homu* is affected negatively because it will be given away and is therefore interpreted as **malefactive**.

Arguments with a [-animate] feature may also be interpreted as **patient** and **benefactive** or **malefactive**, e.g.

65. Makhanikhi u-kolota movha **oyili**
 1mechanic 1SC-owe-PRS 3car 9oil
 (The mechanic owes the car oil)

In this example *oyili* is **patient** .

2.3.7 Verbs of providing

2.3.7.1 Verbs of fulfilling

2.3.7.1.1 External argument

The external argument of these verbs also occurs with [+animate] and [-animate] features. Consider the following examples:

66. **[+animate]**
- a. **Mulanguteri** u-humesa tiyunifomo ejele
 1warder 1SC-issue-PRS 10uniforms LOC-5jail
 (The warder issues uniforms in jail)
 - b. **Murimi** u-yisa mihandzu evhengeleni
 1farmer 1SC-supply-CAUS-PRS 4fruit LOC-5store

(The farmer supplies fruit to the store)

- c. **Tintsumi** ti-siya hlomisa evukatini
 10messengers 10SC-leave-PRS 5bride LOC-14in-laws
 (Messengers leave the bride at her in-laws)

67. [-animate]

- a. **Khamphani** yi-humesile cheke exikolweni
 9company 9SC-issue-PFT 9cheque LOC-7school
 (The company issued out a cheque to the school)
- b. **Muchini** wu-humesile thikithi egarajini
 3machine 3SC-issue-PFT 5ticket LOC-9garage
 (The machine issued a ticket at the garage)
- c. **Mugodi** wu-yisa dayimani endzhandzheni
 3mine 3SC-supply-CAUS-PRS 9diamond LOC-3overseas
 (The mine supplies diamond overseas)
- d. **Rifu** ri-siya xikweleti emutini
 5death 5SC-leave-PRS 7debt LOC-3family
 (Death leaves debt to the family)

Table 9: The external argument

Verbs	+Animate	-Animate
humesa (issue)	+	+
yisa (supply)	+	+
siya (leave)	+	+

Interpretation of external argument

The argument bearing a [+animate] feature is interpreted as **agent** because it is the wilful initiator of an action, whereas the argument with the [-animate] feature is interpreted as **cause** because it is it that causes the action expressed by the predicate to happen. See examples 66a and 67b above respectively.

The external argument, both [+animate] and [-animate], can also be interpreted as **source** because the uniforms and tickets come from *mulanguteri* and *muchini* respectively.

2.3.7.1.2 Primary internal argument

This argument succeeds the verb directly. It can occur with both [+animate] and [-animate] features.

68. [+animate]

- a. Hosi yi-humese **tihomu** timbirhi enkhubyeni
9king 9SC-issue-PFT/supply-PFT 10cows two LOC-3party
(The king issued/supplied two cows to the party)
- b. Wanuna u-siyile **vana** eka wansati
1man 1SC-leave-PFT 2children LOC-1woman
(The man left children to the woman)
- c. Xikolo xa Basani xi-yisa **vadyondzi** eNghunghunyani
7school 7POSS 1PN 7SC-supply-CAUS-PRS 2pupils LOC-1PN
(Basani school supplies pupils to Nghunghunyani)

69. **[-animate]**
- a. Khamphani yi-humesile **cheke** exikolweni
 9company 9SC-issue-CAUS-PFT 9cheque LOC-7school
 (The company issued out a cheque to the school)
- b. Wanuna u-siyile **nhundzu** eka wansati
 1man 1SC-leave-PFT 9goods LOC-1woman
 (The man left goods to the woman)
- c. Mugodi wu-yisile **dayimani** endzhandzheni
 3mine 3SC-export-CAUS-PFT 9diamond LOC-3overseas
 (The mine exported diamond overseas)

Table 10: The primary internal argument

Verbs	+Animate	-Animate
humesa (issue)	+	+
yisa (supply)	+	+
siya (leave)	+	+

Interpretation of internal argument

The internal argument can be interpreted as **patient** irrespective of whether it occurs with a [+animate] or [-animate] feature because it is the one which undergoes the action expressed by the predicate. Consider 68a above for instance.

The internal argument may also be regarded as **theme** when the entity is moved as in 69c above.

2.3.7.2 Equip verb

The external argument can occur with both [+animate] and [-animate] features. It normally occupies the sentence's initial position. The following examples have a [+animate] feature:

2.3.7.2.1 External argument

70. [+animate]

- a. **Xigevenga** xi-hlomisa vanghana hi mikwana
7thug 7SC-arm-CAUS-PRS 2friends with 4knives
(The thug arms friends with knives)
- b. **Tatana** u-byarhile saka hi nhonga
1father 1SC-carry-PFT 5bag with 9stick
(Father carried bag with stick)
- c. **Matironi** u-longisa vaongori hi maphilisi
1matron 1SC-equip-CAUS-PRS 2nurses with 6pills
(The matron equips the nurses with pills)
- d. **Mudyondzisi** u-hakerile vadyondzi hi tibuku
1teacher 1SC-reward-PFT 2students with 10books
(The teacher rewarded the students with books)

71. [-animate]

- a. **Dyondzo** yi-hlomisa vanhu hi vutlhari
9education 9SC-equip-CAUS-PRS 2people with 14wisdom
(Education equips people with wisdom)
- b. **Xileyi** xi-byarha vanhu hi timhandzi

7sleigh 7SC-carry-PRS 2people with 10wood
(A sleigh carries people with wood)

- c. **Masimu** ya-longisile vaendzi hi makwembe
6fields 6SC-equip-CAUS-PFT 2visitors with 6pumpkins
(The fields equipped visitors with pumpkins)
- d. **Masimu** ya-hakerile varimi hi swifaki
6fields 6SC-reward-PFT 2farmers with 8mealies
(The fields rewarded the farmers with mealies)

Table 11: The external argument

Verbs	+Animate	-Animate
hlomisa (equip)	+	+
byarha (carry)	+	+
longisa (equip)	+	+
hakela (reward)	+	+

Interpretation of external argument

The semantic interpretation of the external argument is that of **agent/cause**. All the equip verbs can appear with external arguments with both [+ and -animate] features. Consider the examples 70a and 71a above, where *xigevenga* is the **agent** and *dyondzo* has the **cause** feature.

A semantic interpretation of **source** is also possible because *mikwana* and *vutlhari* in the two examples referred to above respectively are available from the arguments *xigevenga* and *dyondzo*.

2.3.7.2.2 Internal argument

One of the internal arguments here is the primary one and it appears in object position in a construction. It occurs with both [+animate] and [-animate] features. The verb *hakela* (reward) is included here because the {-el-} is an inherent or fossilized part of the basic root and does not carry the applicative meaning anymore. Consider the examples below:

72. [+animate]

- a. Xibedhlele xi-hlomisa **madokodela** hi vutivi
7hospital 7SC-arm-CAUS-PRS 6doctors with 14knowledge
(The hospital arms doctors with knowledge)
- b. Wanuna u-byarha **muabyi** hi makatla
1man 1SC-carry-PRS 1patient with 6shoulders
(The man carries the patient with shoulders)
- c. Xikolo xi-longisile **vadyondzi** hi tibuku
7school 7SC-equip-CAUS-PFT 2learners with 10books
(The school equipped learners with books)
- d. Ntswele yi-hakerile **murimisi** hi masi
9cow 9SC-reward-PFT 1farmer with 6milk
(The cow rewarded the farmer with milk)

73. [-animate]

- a. Muchayeri u-hlomisile **xibebe** hi tende
1driver 1SC-arm-CAUS-PFT 7van with 5canopy
(The driver armed the van with a canopy)
- b. Wansati u-byarha **mpingu** hi mbilu

1woman 1SC-carry-PRS 3problems with 9heart
 (The woman carries problems with heart)

c. Mafeti u-longisile **xihaha-mpfhuka** hi tiparachuti
 1PN 1SC-equip-CAUS-PFT 7aeroplane with 10parachutes
 (Mafeti equipped the aeroplane with parachutes)

d. Tlilabu yi-hakerile **movha** hi mathayere lamantshwa
 9club 9SC-reward-PFT 3car with 6tyres new
 (The club rewarded the car with new tyres)

Table 12: The internal argument

Verbs	+Animate	-Animate
hlomisa (equip)	+	+
byarha (carry)	+	+
longisa (equip)	+	+
hakela (reward)	+	+

Interpretation of internal argument

The equip verb assigns a theta role of **patient** to the internal argument in object position, both [+ and –animate], cf. example 72a and 73a respectively above.

As an entity which is moved, *movabyi* in example 72b can also be interpreted as **theme**. A further interpretation of **beneficiary** is possible as the patient receives help from the man and is thus saved the trouble of walking.

2.3.7.2.3 The hi- argument

The **hi-** argument fulfils an **instrumental** function and appears at the end of the sentence, e.g.

74. Xigevenga xi-hlomisa vanghana **hi mikwana**
 7thug 7SC-arm-CAUS-PRS 2friends with 4knives
 (The thug arms friends with knives)

2.3.8 Verbs of obtaining

Under this category we again distinguish two types, viz. get verbs and obtain verbs.

2.3.8.1 Get verbs

2.3.8.1.1 External argument

75. **[+animate]**
- a. **Mutluti** u-ta-xava xikwekwetsu
 1sailor 1SC-FUT-buy 7boat
 (The sailor will buy a boat)
- b. **Magezi** u-kumile ntirho
 1PN 1SC-find-PFT 3job
 (Magezi has found a job)
- c. **Mfenhe** yi-khatela mihandzu
 9monkey 9SC-pick-APL-PRS 4fruit
 (The monkey picks fruit)

- d. **Hosi** yi-tlhavile homu
 9king 9SC-slaughter-PFT 9ox
 (The king has slaughtered an ox)
- e. **Wansati** u-hlayisile ndhawu
 1woman 1SC-reserve-PFT 9place
 (The woman has reserved a place)
- f. **Vatirhi** va-yivile swiambalo
 2workers 2SC-steal-PFT 8clothes
 (The workers have stolen clothes)
76. **[-animate]**
- a. **Mali** yi-ta-xava bindzu
 9money 9SC-FUT-buy 5business
 (Money will buy a business)
- b. **Tafula** ri-kumile pholichi
 5table 5SC-get-PFT 9polish
 (The table has got polish)
- c. **Muchini** wu-khatela mihandzu
 3machine 3SC-pick-APL-PRS 4fruit
 (The machine picks fruit)
- d. **Mukwana** wu-tlhavile huku
 3knife 3SC-slaughter-PFT 9chicken
 (The knife slaughtered a chicken)
- e. **Xithuthuthu** xi-hlayisile vupakelo
 7motorbike 7SC-reserve-PFT 14parking

(The motorbike has reserved parking)

- f. **Xikepe** xi-yiva mahlo
 7boat 7SC-steal-PRS 6eyes
 (The boat steals eyes)

Table 13: The external argument

Verbs	+Animate	-Animate
xava (buy)	+	+
kuma (find)	+	+
khatela (pick)	+	+
tlhava (slaughter)	+	+
hlayisa (reserve)	+	+
yiva (steal)	+	+

Interpretation of the external argument

When the subject argument has the feature [+animate], both human and animal, all the get verbs will accept it. All the arguments with a [+animate] feature may be interpreted as **agent** because their action is accompanied by volition. Because the external argument also benefits from the action expressed by the verb (cf. example 76b for an argument with a [-animate] feature), an interpretation of **benefactive** is also possible. A reading of **recipient** is also possible where the subject argument is the receiver of the object of the action expressed by the verb.

However, if the object is disadvantaged, the external argument may have a reading of malefactive. Consider the following example:

77. **Mutluti** u-xavile maxangu

1sailor 1SC-buy-PFT 6hardship
 (The sailor has bought hardship)

When the external argument has a [-animate] feature, an interpretation of **instrument** is possible with all but *tafula* (example 76b) and *xikepe* (example 76f) which have a reading of **patient** and **benefactive**.

When the external argument has a [+abstract] feature, all the get verbs will accept it and it will have an interpretation of **agent/recipient**. However, the sentences assume a figurative meaning. Consider the following examples:

78. **Vulolo** byi-kumile n'wini
 14laziness 14SC-find-PFT 1owner
 (Laziness found an owner)
79. **Vukriste** byi-tlhavile vuhedeni
 14Christianity 14SC-slaughter-PFT 14heathenism
 (Christianity slaughtered heathenism)
80. **Vuphukuphuku** byi-khatela vusiwana
 14stupidity 14SC-pick-APL-PRS 14-poverty
 (Stupidity picks poverty)
81. **Vukwele** byi-hlayisa swikhupi
 14jealousy 14SC-reserve-PRS 8grudges
 (Jealousy reserves grudges)
82. **Rirhandzu** ri-yiva mbilu
 5love 5SC-steal-PRS 9heart
 (Love steals the heart)

2.3.8.1.2 Internal argument

83. [+animate]

- a. Mafeti u-xavile **hlonga**
1PN 1SC-buy-PFT 5slave
(Mafeti bought a slave)
- b. Wansati u-kumile **n'wana**
1woman 1SC-find-PFT 1child
(The woman found a child)
- c. Vavasati va-khatela **masonja**
2women 2SC-pick-APL-PRS 6mopani worms
(The women pick mopani worms)
- d. Tatana u-tlhavile **mbuti**
1father 1SC-slaughter-PFT 9goat
(Father slaughtered a goat)
- e. Nhwana u-hlaysiaile **wanuna**
1girl 1SC-reserve-PFT 1man
(The girl has reserved a man)
- f. Feme yi-yivile **mutirhi**
9firm 9SC-steal-PFT 1worker
(The firm has stolen a worker)

84. [-animate]

- a. Mali yi-ta-xava **bindzu**
9money 9SC-FUT-buy 5business
(The money will buy a business)

- b. Tafula ri-ta-kuma **pende**
5table 5SC-FUT-get 9paint
(The table will get paint)
- c. Muchini wu-khatela **mihandzu**
3machine 3SC-pick-APL-PRS 4fruit
(The machine picks fruit)
- d. Mukwana wu-tlhavile **rivanti**
3knife 3SC-stab-PFT 11door
(The knife has stabbed the door)
- e. Wansati u-hlayisile **ndhawu**
1woman 1SC-reserve-PFT 9place
(The woman has reserved a place)
- f. Vatirhi va-yivile **swambalo**
2workers 2SC-steal-PFT 8clothes
(The workers have stolen clothes)

Table 14: The internal argument

Verbs	+Animate	-Animate
xava (buy)	+	+
kuma (find)	+	+
khatela (pick)	+	+
tlhava (slaughter)	+	+
hlayisa (reserve)	+	+
yiva (steal)	+	+

Interpretation of internal argument

Whether the primary internal argument has a [+animate] or [-animate] feature, all the get verbs will accept it. It will be interpreted as **theme**.

2.3.8.2 Obtain verbs

2.3.8.2.1 External argument

The external argument may appear with [+animate] and [-animate] features as in the examples that follow:

85. [+animate]

- a. **Maphorisa** ya-amukerile mudlayi eka mufundhisi
6cops 6SC-accept-PFT 1murderer LOC-1priest
(The cops accepted a murderer from the priest)
- b. **N'wana** u-nkhensa switsundzuxo eka vatswari
1child 1SC-accept-PRS 8advice LOC-2parents
(The child accepts advice from the parents)
- c. **Phorisa** ri-hlengeletile swibamu entshungwini
5policeman 5SC-collect-PFT 8guns LOC-3crowd
(The policeman collected guns from the crowd)
- d. **Mbyana** yi-khomile phayisela eka swigevenga
9dog 9SC-seize-PFT 5parcel LOC-8thieves
(The dog seized a parcel from the thieves)
- e. **Makhamba** ya-vutlile xipachi eka wansati
6thugs 6SC-snatch-PFT 9purse LOC-1woman

(The thugs snatched a purse from the woman)

- f. **Thicara** u-hlawurile xitsutsumi etlilasini
 1teacher 1SC-select-PFT 7athlete LOC-9class
 (The teacher selected an athlete from class)
86. **[-animate]**
- a. **Movha** wu-amukerile dizele epompeni
 3car 3SC-accept-PFT 9diesel LOC-9pump
 (The car accepted diesel from the pump)
- b. **Xihuhuri** xi-hlengeletile maphepha enhoveni
 7whirlwind 7SC-collect-PFT 6papers LOC-9veld
 (The whirlwind has collected papers in the veld)
- c. **Mitwa** yi-khomile maphayisela eka mukhalabye
 4thorns 4SC-seize-PFT 6parcels LOC-1old man
 (The thorns seized the parcels from the old man)
- d. **Xidzedze** xi-vutlile duku eka wansati
 7storm 7SC-snatch-PFT 5headcloth LOC-1woman
 (The storm snatched a headcloth from the woman)
- e. **Vudlayi** byi-hlawurile ndhawu embilwini
 14Murder 14SC-select-PFT 9place LOC-9heart
 (Murder selected a place in the heart)

Table 15: The external argument

Verbs	+Animate	-Animate
amukela (accept)	+	+
nkhensa (accept)	+	+
hlingeleta (collect)	+	+
khoma (seize)	+	+
vutla (snatch)	+	+
hlawula (select)	+	+

Interpretation of the external argument

When the subject argument has a [+animate] feature, all the obtain verbs will accept it. In this case the external argument will be interpreted as **agent/recipient**.

External arguments with a [-animate] feature will also be accepted by obtain verbs. They may be interpreted as **recipient** with the verb *amukela* and as **cause** with the rest.

2.3.8.2.2 Primary internal argument**87. [+animate]**

- a. Wanuna u-amukele **n'wana** eka vatswari
1man 1SC-accept-PFT 1child LOC-2parents
(The man accepted a child from the parents)
- b. Wansati u-nkhensa **n'wana** eka Xikwembu
1woman 1SC-accept-PRS 1child LOC-7God

(The woman accepts a child from God)

- c. Tshameleni u-hlengeletile **maxaka** etihositele
1PN 1SC-gather-PFT 6relatives LOC-10hostels
(Tshameleni gathered relatives from hostels)
 - d. Darada yi-khomile **huku** eka wansati
9wire 9SC-seize-PFT 9chicken LOC-1woman
(The wire seized the chicken from the woman)
 - e. Mufana u-vutlile **makwavo** endlopfini
1boy 1SC-snatch-PFT 1his brother LOC-9elephant
(The boy snatched his brother from the elephant)
 - f. Muhehi u-hlawurile **murhangeri** entlaweni
1PN 1SC-select-PFT 1leader LOC-3group
(Muhehi selected a leader from the group)
88. [-animate]
- a. Byongo byi-amukele **xileriso** eka xandla
14brain 14SC-accept-PFT 7instruction LOC-7hand
(The brain accepted instruction from the hand)
 - b. Mufana u-nkhensa **switsundzuxo** eka vatswari
1boy 1SC-accept-PRS 8advice LOC-2parents
(The boy accepts advice from the parents)
 - c. Phorisa ri-hlengeletile **swibamu** evanhwini
5policeman 5SC-collect-PFT 8guns LOC-2people
(The policeman collected guns from the people)

- d. Mbyana yi-khomile **phayisela** eka swigevenga
 9dog 9SC-seize-PFT 5parcel LOC-8thieves
 (The dog seized the parcel from the thieves)
- e. Makhamba ya-vutlile **xipachi** eka wansati
 6thugs 6SC-snatch-PFT 7purse LOC-1woman
 (The thugs snatched the purse from the woman)
- f. Meyara u-hlawurile **swambalo** evhengeleni
 1mayor 1SC-select-PFT 10clothes LOC-5shop
 (The Mayor selected clothes from the shop)

Table 16: The primary internal argument

Verbs	+Animate	-Animate
amukela (accept)	+	+
nkhensa (accept)	+	+
hlingeleta (collect)	+	+
khoma (seize)	+	+
vutla (snatch)	+	+
hlawula (select)	+	+

Interpretation of the primary internal argument

When the primary internal argument has the feature [+animate] all the verbs of obtaining will accept it. In this instance the argument will be interpreted as **theme**.

The primary internal argument with a [-animate] feature is also acceptable to the verbs of obtaining. Its semantic interpretation will also be **theme**.

2.3.8.2.3 Locative argument

Interpretation of the locative argument

The locative argument may have the meaning 'from' as in the sentences given in paragraphs 2.3.8.2.1 and 2.3.8.2.2 above. All the verbs of obtaining will accept locative arguments with any of the features that have been mentioned. In all such cases the locative argument will be interpreted as **source**.

2.3.9 Verbs of exchange

2.3.9.1 External argument

89. [+animate]

- a. **Wansati** u-cincisile rhoko hi hembe
1woman 1SC-exchange-CAUS-PFT 9dress with 9shirt
(The woman exchanged the dress for a shirt)
- b. **Wanuna** u-sivile wachi hi thayi
1man 1SC-substitute-PFT 9watch with 9tie
(The man substituted a tie for a watch)
- c. **Murimi** u-bindzurisile nyimpfu hi sudu
1farmer 1SC-trade-CAUS-PFT 9sheep with 9suit
(The farmer traded the sheep for a suit)

90. [-animate]

- a. **Khumbi** ri-cincisile pende hi phepha
5wall 5SC-exchange-CAUS-PFT 9paint with 9paper
(The wall exchanged the paint for wall paper)

- b. **Bazi** ri-sivile pitirolo hi dizele
5bus 5SC-substitute-PFT 9petrol with 9diesel
(The bus substituted petrol for diesel)
- c. **Xirhapa** xi-bindzurisile swiluva hi matsavu
7garden 7SC-trade-CAUS-PFT 8flowers with 6vegetables
(The garden traded flowers for vegetables)
- d. **Teretere** yi-hundzurile budula patu
9tractor 9SC-turn-PFT 5oxpath into 5road
(The tractor turned the oxpath into a road)
- e. **Rhoboto** yi-hundzurile muhlovo wo tshwuka hi wa rihlaza
9robot 9SC-change-PFT 3colour POSS-red for POSS-green
(The robot changed the red colour for green)

Table 17: The external argument

Verbs	+Animate	-Animate
cincisa (exchange)	+	+
siva (substitute)	+	+
bindzurisa (trade)	+	+
hundzula (change)	+	+

Interpretation of the external argument

In all cases where the external argument has the [+animate] feature, all the verbs of exchange will accept such an argument and it will be interpreted as **agent**. A reading of **source** and **recipient** is also possible because of the action of 'giving' and that of 'receiving' in return.

Where the argument has a [-animate] feature it will be interpreted as **cause** and all the verbs of exchange will accept it.

2.3.9.2 Internal argument

91. [+animate]

- a. Wansati u-cincisile **nhwanyana** hi mufana
1woman 1SC-exchange-CAUS-PFT 1girl for 1boy
(The woman exchanged a girl for a boy)
- b. Mulungu u-sivile **wansati** hi wanuna
1employer 1SC-substitute-PFT 1woman with 1man
(The employer substituted a woman for a man)
- c. Murimi u-bindzurisile **homu** hi xikanyakanya
1farmer 1SC-trade-CAUS-PFT 9cow with 9bicycle
(The farmer traded a cow for a bicycle)

92. [-animate]

- a. Malume u-cincisile **yindlu** hi bazi
1uncle 1SC-exchange-CAUS-PFT 9house with 5bus
(Uncle exchanged the house for a bus)
- b. Khamba ri-sivile **tibuku** hi khomphyutha
5thief 5SC-substitute-PFT 10books with 9computer
(The thief substituted books for a computer)
- c. Kokwana u-bindzurile **mapoto** hi swambalo
1granny 1SC-trade-PFT 6pots with 8clothes
(Granny traded pots for clothes)

- d. Muaki u-hundzule **khixi** kamara
 1builder 1SC-change-PFT 5kitchen into 5bedroom
 (The builder changed the kitchen for a bedroom)

Table 18: The primary internal argument

Verbs	+Animate	-Animate
cincisa (exchange)	+	+
siva (substitute)	+	+
bindzurisa (trade)	+	+
hundzula (change)	+	+

Interpretation of the primary internal argument

All the verbs of exchange will accept the primary internal argument with both the feature [+animate] and [-animate]. All such arguments will be interpreted as **theme**.

2.3.9.3 Hi-phrase

The argument in the **hi**-phrase can be [+animate] or [-animate]; [+concrete] or [-concrete]; [+mass [+count] or [-count]], e.g.

Interpretation of the hi-phrase

All the verbs of exchange will accept the hi-phrase with the features [+/- animate]. Such phrases will all be interpreted as **instrument**.

2.3.10 Summary

In this section the various theta roles were defined with each being accompanied by an appropriate example sentence. A brief explanation of the difference between lexical-syntactic and lexical-semantic representation was also given. It was further indicated in this discussion that theta roles may be semantically interpreted and that only one theta role may be assigned to one argument and vice versa. An interpretation of the arguments of the verbs of change of possession indicates that each argument has semantic features that distinguish it from other arguments. Some of these features restrict the occurrence of certain arguments internally or externally.

2.4 Conclusion

In recapitulation, two lexical representations were presented, viz. lexical-syntactic and lexical-semantic representations.

Under lexical–syntactic representation the distribution of lexical items in various sentence constructions, containing the various types of verbs of change of possession was discussed. In this case semantic relationships between the predicate and its arguments are not specified according to semantic labels.

Under lexical-semantic representation the various theta roles were defined and explained viz. **agent, patient, theme, experiencer, benefactive, malefactive, goal, source, location, cause, recipient, instrument** and **purpose**. The lexical features of nouns were also discussed and example sentences analysed. The analysis reveals that certain nominal features constrain certain verbs from appearing with certain NP arguments. The interpretation of arguments depends on their semantic features such as [+animate], [+human] [+/-concrete].

The assignment of a theta role to the external NP argument via the predication theory was explained. It was also indicated that the assignment of theta roles to internal arguments is done by the VP inside its maximal projection and that it takes place under government.

The different types of verbs of change of possession were analysed individually, first with external arguments, and then with primary and/or secondary internal arguments. In each case individual conclusions were drawn in accordance with interpretations of individual arguments. In Chapter 3 we shall consider the various alternations that verbs of change of possession participate in.