A STUDY OF GRAMMATICAL AGREEMENT

IN KIMERU SYNTAX

A

TRANSFORMATIONAL APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

Traditional Bantuists and transformationalist grammarians are at
variance in their treatment of gender,and consequently grammatical
agreement in Bantu syntax. Bantuists give equal status to all
prefixes in a structure in contexts of agreement. Transformationalist
linguists maintain that only nouns have inherent gender and there-
fore they control grammatical agreement. The study takes the
transformationalist position in investigating and accounting for
grammatical agreement in Kimeru syntax.

Chapter I is a general introduction to the study that shows,
among other things, the historical and linguistic background of
Meru people, the significance of the study and its aims and scope.
The phonological and morphological aspects of the language relevant
and essential to analysis of agreement are discussed in the next
Chapter. Then follows the Chapter on the base and the lexicon
whose importance is in the linking role it plays in characterizing
the underlying structure of the language largely missed by the
preceding discussions, but on which the forthcoming Chapters
depend.

Chapters IV and V form the major part of the study. The basic
concern of Chapter IV is the nature of agreement in the complex
verbal structure. Issues such as gender conflicts in conjunction
reduction obviously involve verbal aspects and are therefore
discussed here. The conditioning of agreement by covert gender

is illustrated with the obligatory subject noun verb agreement operation. The requirements derived genders dictate on agreement realization are also discussed in this Chapter.

The triple goals of Chapter V inseparably relate to each other. So the important question of adjectival source, the relationship between adjectivals and relative clauses and how their derivation influences the behaviour of grammatical agreement operations in environments of noun qualification are all simulteneously examined. The long argument constructed in this Chapter is based on a tentative distinction assumed between basic adjectives and derived adjectivals. The facts of the language examined in this Chapter clearly demonstrate that not only does the language ignore the assumed distinction between basic adjectives and adjectivals but also fails to observe any such distinction between verbs and adjectives themselves. The inexistence of these distinctions is shown to explain the curious behaviour of agreement operations in noun qualificatives. The Chapter focuses on the fact that gender concord in this environment is only explicable in terms of derivational operations and the resulting aspectual contrasts of adjectivals from underlying sentences.

The Chapter also deals with agreement in numerical, determiners and -A- links as other types of nominal modifiers.

Chapter VI - the last one - consists of the summary of findings and the logical conclusion these findings imply for both the Bantuists' and transformationalists' account of agreement and also the nature of agreement in Kimeru syntax.