

# Evidence for a Clitic Analysis of Object Markers in Kuria

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## 1. Introduction: the analysis of Bantu object markers

As is common for many Bantu languages, the thematic object in Kuria may be realized on the verbal form as a pre-stem morpheme commonly referred to as an object marker (OM):

- (1) a. n-aa-tém-ér-é                      ómo-gámbi    [Kuria]  
      FOC.1sgSA-PST-hit-PF-FV    1-king  
      ‘I hit the king.’
- b. n-aa-mó-tém-ér-e<sup>1</sup>  
      FOC.1sgSA-PST-**1OM**-hit-PF-FV  
      ‘I hit him.’

As has been the case for clitics in Indo-European languages, the precise nature of object markers has long been an area of study for Bantu languages, with the main proposals centering on whether they are essentially pronouns, or essentially agreement morphemes. In the same spirit, in this paper we investigate the nature of the object marker in Kuria, concluding that it ought to be analyzed as a clitic, the same sort of syntactic element as Indo-European clitics. This is an empirical claim more than a theoretical one, as a unified and explanatory analysis of clitics continues to be an interesting puzzle for

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\* All the authors were affiliated with Pomona College at the time of the research and writing of the paper (at time of publication Ranero is affiliated with the University of Cambridge); please direct correspondence to michael.diercks@pomona.edu. This paper was developed in concert with Ranero et al (2014), which discusses the morphosyntactic derivation and explanation of Kuria OMs. These papers are therefore sister papers that should be considered in tandem for the most complete understanding of Kuria Oming. The data for this paper were elicited in Claremont, CA, and the research finds its source in the Spring 2012 Field Methods class at Pomona College (and based on Diercks, Ranero, and Cramerus 2013). Our greatest thanks and appreciation go to Johnes Kitololo for his judgments and his endless patience that made this paper possible. Thanks also to the participants of ACAL at Georgetown University for their comments and feedback, and in particular to Norvin Richards, Coppe van Urk, Omer Preminger, Ruth Kramer, Michael Marlo, Brent Henderson, Patricia Schneider-Zioga and Claire Halpert for their insightful comments and critiques.

<sup>1</sup> Glossing conventions are introduced in footnote 5 below. Though tone is not the focus of this paper, it is worth explaining a bit about the tone system here since the careful reader will have observed a tone difference on the FV of the verb in (1a) vs. (1b). As detailed in Mwita (2008) and Marlo et al (2014), the remote past tense (the form in which most examples in the present paper appear) assigns a H tone to the first mora of the verb’s macrostem (a unit to be discussed later; in effect, the H is assigned to the first OM if any, or to the first mora of the verb root if no OMs are present). The regular phonology of the language spreads a H tone rightward to all vowels in the verb phrase, up to and including the penultimate mora (in some cases spreading into the FV as well; spreading to the FV may be optional, or a principle may later be discovered that predicts when spreading to the FV is allowed). If a H tone is followed by another H in the phrase, the spreading will stop one mora short of the following H, leaving a toneless mora in between that is pronounced with a low tone. These principles, along with the assumption that nouns have an underlying H tone on the initial mora of the root, suffice to account for all of the tone patterns observed in the data in this paper, except for some idiosyncratic tones on nouns/proper names that we take to be lexically specified, and a few other cases as noted.

syntactic theory. Clitics, and clitic doubling constructions, have been analyzed in a broad range of ways—as the result of agreement relations, movement of the clitics themselves, realizations of multiple copies of a DP element, or sometimes some combination of the above (for references and discussion, see section 1.2). The particular analysis for any given language often depends on the properties of that language’s clitic constructions, as at times clitics in any particular case may best be analyzed as the result of Agree relations, and at others as movement of a pronominal element or even a full DP (see Ranero et al 2014 for discussion, also Diercks and Sikuku 2014).

This level of analysis is not our main concern in this paper, however. Our broader concern has to do with establishing correspondences (or not) between related constructions cross-linguistically. If, as we argue, Kuria OMs show the same fundamental properties that clitics in more familiar languages do, then deeper explanatory theories of syntax that are designed to account for the properties of clitics should take into account the properties of Kuria OMs (and, more broadly, the properties of OMs across Bantu languages). Cross-linguistically, as discussed in van Riemsdijk (1999) and Kramer (to appear), clear delineations between “agreement affixes” and “clitics” are not always consistent, and contemporary approaches to analyzing both are often conflated (e.g. Kramer to appear and Harizanov to appear consider Agree a prerequisite to a movement process that ultimately derives a clitic). So we do not intend our claim that Kuria OMs are clitics to be interpreted as a theoretical explanation for their behavior, but rather as a direct statement that they share the sorts of properties that have been documented for elements quite commonly described as “clitics” in other language families, with the consequence that Kuria OMs must be analyzed using the same kinds of theoretical mechanisms, and that Kuria OMs must be considered when developing a syntactic architecture that can account for clitics (for Kuria specifically we take up this task in Ranero et al 2014, but detailing this level of explanatory analysis is beyond the scope of this present paper).

In this paper, then, we provide evidence for the clitic nature of the Kuria OM based on familiar diagnostics (from both within and beyond Bantu languages) but also provide discussion defending this approach in spite of the different morphological context of Bantu OMs vs. Indo-European clitics (Bantu OMs occur inside the verbal form, between inflectional prefixes on the verb and the verb stem). In the rest of this first section we will briefly lay out the backdrop of existing research on these issues, surveying empirical and theoretical conclusions.

### 1.1. Existing patterns of clitic-doubling

A number of relevant kinds of patterns are well known from studies of clitics in Romance and Indo-European languages. For instance, in Rioplatense Spanish direct objects can be clitic doubled, meaning that a clitic may co-occur with a corresponding *in-situ* object (Anagnostopoulou 2006: 520):

- (2) Lo vimos a Juan. [Rioplatense Spanish]  
 Him we-saw *a* Juan  
 ‘We saw Juan.’

All dialects of Spanish allow indirect objects to be clitic doubled (Anagnostopoulou 2006: 520):

- (3) Miguelito (le) regaló un caramelo a Mafalda. [All dialects of Spanish]  
 Miguelito CL-DAT gave a candy *a* Mafalda  
 ‘Miguelito gave Mafalda a piece of candy.’

These patterns contrast with French, which does not allow clitic doubling (Anagnostopoulou 2006: 520):<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Kayne (2000: 164-5) argues that French does allow clitic doubling, though restricted to co-occurrence with strong pronouns (a pattern that is replicated in Kuria; see (15) below).



tool for researchers analyzing OMs.<sup>4</sup> On a standard generative approach the incorporated pronoun analysis is taken to rule out the co-occurrence of an OM and a postverbal object (because the OM originates as the object of the verb and incorporates into the verb itself). The agreement analysis, on the other hand, posits that an OM originates on a functional head higher in the syntactic structure and distinct from the object, which has its features valued via an Agree operation by the features of the object. This readily explains co-occurrence of an OM with a postverbal object, and in fact predicts it in most instances. But as pointed out by many researchers, the empirical patterns of OMs within and across languages do not fall into two distinct and non-overlapping sets, as might be predicted by a simple contrast between an agreement analysis and a pronominal analysis (Riedel 2009, Marten et al 2007, Marten and Kula 2012, Zeller 2012, Marlo to appear a).

Bax and Diercks (2012) put forth the claim that OMs in Manyika (and in Bantu languages more broadly) ought to be analyzed as clitics—essentially intermediate elements that cannot be solely identified as pronominal or as agreement morphemes (see Zeller 2012 on this point as well). This label is somewhat uninformative, as clitics in the Indo-European literature have long been given analyses of either movement of the clitic pronouns (Kayne 1975, Uriagereka 1995, Anagnostopoulou 2003) or realizations of agreement relations (Suñer 1988, Sportiche 1996, Franco 2000). Therefore, detailing the terms under consideration and their content is important for clarifying the contribution of such a claim.

We take clitics (descriptively) to be intermediate elements between agreement affixes and pronouns (independent syntactic elements), relying largely on the description of clitic properties in van Riemsdijk 1999 and Anagnostopoulou 2006. Therefore, we expect that while clitics ought to be morphophonologically dependent on other elements, they should still bear some degree of morphosyntactic independence, and that combinations of these traits ought to serve to distinguish them from morphemes that are purely agreement affixes (which lack the morphosyntactic independence that is the hallmark of clitic morphemes). This is a surface distinction and not necessarily a claim about the underlying structure, but such a claim is useful for clarifying what kinds of data patterns from what kinds of languages we need to be considering in evaluating the theoretical significance of cliticization processes cross-linguistically. In the sections 3 and 4 we consider arguments that Kuria OMs are clitic elements, followed by a short discussion of the morphophonological plausibility of analyzing Kuria OMs as word-internal clitics in section 5. Space prohibits us from taking up the specific theoretical mechanisms that generate Kuria OMs – this matter is addressed in Ranero et al (2014). This paper therefore contributes to the theoretical discussion by giving additional empirical support to the analysis of Bantu OMs as clitics, in this instance relying on phonological, morphological, and syntactic evidence from Kuria. The empirical contribution of the paper is a description and summary of the morphosyntactic and morphophonological properties of object marking in Kuria.

## 2. Kuria n+1 effect

In order to contextualize the arguments we put forward to treat Kuria OMs as clitics, it is necessary to familiarize the reader with the general patterning of object marking and OM doubling found in the language (as these patterns themselves are notable and require introduction). For a more detailed description and analysis of this topic, we refer the reader to Ranero et al 2014. In single object constructions, an *in-situ* DP cannot be doubled:

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<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Buell (2005), Adams (2010), van der Spuy (1993), Zeller (2009, 2012) for Zulu; Zerbian (2006) for Northern Sotho, Byarushengo et al. (1976), Duranti and Byarushengo (1977), and Tenenbaum (1977) for Haya; Riedel (2009) for Haya and Sambia; Henderson (2006) for a variety of languages, among other sources.











- (25) a. N-a-ba-bona. (\*baa-somi) [Lubukusu]  
 1sgSM-PST-2OM-see (\*2-students)  
 ‘I saw them.’ (not possible: ‘I saw the students.’)
- b. N-a-ba-bona, baa-somi. [Lubukusu]  
 1sgSM-PST-2OM-see 2-students  
 ‘I saw them, the students.’

As can be seen in the two examples above, an OM cannot co-occur with a postverbal object in Lubukusu in neutral contexts unless there is a clear prosodic break between the verb and the object, marked here with a comma, indicating dislocation of the object in the presence of an OM.

Without reproducing the examples here, all of the instances of doubling reported in this paper and in Ranero et al (2014) can occur without any kind of clear intonational breaks of the sort that are present in Lubukusu. In fact, the available phonological evidence points towards the doubled object belonging to a unit that contains the macrostem of the verb. As can be observed throughout this paper (see also footnote 1 and references therein), a H tone on the verb will spread rightward to the penultimate mora of the verb phrase, including a doubled object. As just one example, consider (26), where the H tone assigned to the OM /ga-/ spreads rightward all the way through the verb, including the FV, and onto the first vowel of the noun class prefix of the doubled object ‘chief’ (further spreading is blocked by the H tone on the first vowel of the noun root):

- (26) omo-óná n-aa-gá-mú-ráágír:-íy-í ómo-kámá i-nyáámú  
 1-child FOC-1SA.PST-6OM-1OM-eat.APPL-CAUS.PF-FV 1-chief 4-cat  
 ‘The child fed the cat it (the milk) for the chief.’

We interpret this as evidence that the objects in Kuria are canonically *in-situ* in the vP and part of the verb phrase constituent. The crucial evidence that undoubled and doubled objects are not dislocated in canonical circumstances comes from a contrast with dislocated post-verbal elements. As shown in (27), within the verb phrase, the stem-initial H spreads all the way to the initial vowel of the noun class prefix on the object. However, the initial H of the noun stem stops spreading at the verb phrase boundary and does not proceed onto the initial vowel of the dislocated subject. The dislocated subject may be preceded by a pause, but this is not obligatory:

- (27) m-baa-sóm-ér-é íbi-tábú (/) aba-áná ba-ára (/) buuya  
 FOC-3plSA.PST-read-PF-FV 8-book 2-child 2-those well  
 ‘They read the books, those children, well.’

The H spreading within but not beyond the verb phrase suggests a diagnostic for the verb phrase boundary. In light of this diagnostic, we can contrast the examples like (26), where a doubled object undergoes H spreading, with examples such as (28), where an apparent monotransitive clitic doubling example occurs (apparently in violation of the *n+1 effect*). As can be seen below, however, the object does not undergo H spreading precisely because, we argue, the object is dislocated in this instance (meaning this is only an apparent challenge to the *n+1 effect* generalization):

- (28) m-baa-bí-sóm-ér-é ibitábu  
 FOC-3plSA.PST-8OM-read-PF-FV 8-book  
 ‘They read the books.’

All of these diagnostics therefore lead us to conclude that in Kuria contexts where OMs are capable of co-occurring with postverbal objects, the postverbal objects are in their base object positions (as opposed to right-dislocated). These are therefore instances of OM-doubling (and as we will conclude in what follows, clitic doubling).

## 4. Distinguishing clitics from agreement affixes

The preceding section established that co-occurrences of objects and OMs in Kuria are in fact instances of doubling the OM with an *in-situ* object. Given the tradition of analyses in Bantu languages, it is plausible therefore to simply analyze Kuria OMs as agreement affixes. This section will show that there is good reason to believe that this is insufficient, however, as in many ways OMs do not show expected properties of agreement affixes.

### 4.1. Optionality as a diagnostic

Preminger (2009) proposes a diagnostic for distinguishing clitics and agreement morphemes based on the properties of Basque morphology. Preminger's diagnostic is given in (29):

(29) Preminger's diagnostic

Given a scenario where the relation R between an agreement morpheme M and the corresponding full noun phrase N is broken—but the result is still a grammatical utterance—the proposed diagnostic supplies a conclusion about R as follows:

- a. M shows up with default  $\phi$ -features (rather than the features of N)  $\rightarrow$  R is Agree
- b. M disappears entirely  $\rightarrow$  R is clitic doubling

The idea here is that agreement morphemes and clitics can be distinguished based on when their relationship with their associate is broken in some way: default forms appear for agreement morphemes, but clitic morphemes do not surface. Without even building a specific context for breaking agreements in Kuria, a broader-level observation is relevant here: OMs in general are optional, in the sense that a given verbal form may or may not have an OM present (depending on discourse context). This is true of non-doubled OMs (30) and doubled OMs (31):

- (30) a. n-aa-róóch-é                      ómo-gááká  
 FOC.1sgSA-PST-see.PF-FV              1-man  
 'I saw the man.'
- b. n-aa-mó-róóch-e  
 FOC.1sgSA-PST-1OM-see.PF-FV  
 'I saw him (the man).'
- (31) a. omw-árimú              n-aa-néng-ééy-é                      ába-íséké                      áma-hánga  
 1-teacher              FOC-2SA.PST-give.as.gift-APPL.PF-FV              2-women                      6-clothing  
 'The teacher gave the women the clothing.'
- b. omw-árimú              n-aa-gá-bá-néng-ééy-e  
 1-teacher              FOC-2SA.PST-6OM-2OM-give.as.gift-APPL.PF-FV  
 'The teacher gave them it.'
- c. omw-árimú              n-aa-gá-**bá**-néng-ééy-é                      **ába-íséke**  
 1-teacher              FOC-2SA.PST-6OM-2OM-give.as.gift-APPL.PF-FV                      2-women  
 'The teacher gave it (the clothing) to the women.'

In contrast, subject marking in Kuria is (to our knowledge) always obligatory, meaning that some form of subject agreement will always appear on a verb form, as opposed to object markers, which

may or may not appear on the verb depending on discourse context.<sup>12</sup> This is the widespread pattern of SMs and OMs in Narrow Bantu languages, where subject marking is obligatory (spelled out as a default in some contexts) but object marking optional. A natural avenue to analyze this fact (following Preminger’s diagnostic in (29)) is that OMs are clitic elements (we assume within the  $\nu$ P domain), but SMs are in fact purely the realization of phi-feature agreement on T.<sup>13</sup>

#### 4.2. Featural coarseness of clitic doubling

Another potential diagnostic for agreement relations vs. clitic doubling relationships comes from the featural coarseness of clitic doubling, as opposed to the more fine-grained characteristic of agreement proper:

- (32) The Coarseness Property of Clitic-Doubling (Preminger 2011: 63)  
If  $CL^{\circ}$  is the result of clitic-doubling of some noun-phrase  $\alpha$ , then  $CL^{\circ}$  will reflect the full set of  $\phi$ -features on  $\alpha$ .

Preminger’s (2011) claim here is that an agreement morpheme is capable of reflecting features derived from distinct noun phrases, or capable of reflecting only a subset of a noun phrase’s  $\phi$ -features (e.g. number only, or gender only). A clitic, on the other hand, lacks the ability to display the features of a single person probe or number probe, instead copying an entire NP’s features onto the probing head.

The morphological situation in many Bantu languages, and Kuria in particular, limits the applicability of this diagnostic – in general it is rare to find agreement morphemes analyzable as valuation of individual features independently (as opposed to a collective bundle of phi-features) in the kinds of ways that are more evident in contexts like *omnivorous agreement* (for example, see Preminger 2011 on Kichean, Rezac 2003, Béjar and Rezac 2009 on Basque, also Nevins 2011). Nonetheless, featural coarseness effects can be uncovered in Kuria; as we did above, we rely on distinctions between subject marking and object marking, this time with respect to conjoined subjects and objects. Consider the following examples from Diercks et al (2014), which show the range of agreements that are possible when class 3 and class 5 subjects are conjoined. The first example shows the availability of first conjunct agreement in these instances:

- (33) umu-bííra      ni-iri-gééna      ŋ-gu-bin-ir-e<sup>14</sup>  
3-ball            and-5-stone      FOC-3SA-sing-PF-FV  
‘The ball and the stone sang.’

<sup>12</sup> An exception to this generalization is imperative constructions, but these are likely lacking the relevant heads bearing the phi-features for subject agreement in the first place.

<sup>13</sup> The theoretical significance of the optionality of OMin across Bantu was first brought to our attention by Vicki Carstens. An anonymous reviewer notes that there are some apparent counter-examples to the notion we adopt here that object marking is subject to discourse conditions (with the implication that agreement markers are not, and therefore not optional) (Suñer 1988, Coppock and Wechsler 2012, Corbett 2006). We cannot take space to respond to all the apparent counter-examples, but as an illustration we point mainly to Swahili object markers, referenced by Suñer (1988), which we would argue are in fact clitics and *not* pure agreement affixes (sharing some core properties with other related languages that arguably have cliticized object markers, e.g. Manyika, Zulu, Lubukusu, and Kuria). This would suggest, then, that the apparent counter-examples are perhaps not in fact all instances of agreement proper, *contra* Harizanov’s (to appear) assumptions in this regard (though this may well boil down to terminological differences regarding what “agreement” refers to in various works, rather than an actual analytical difference).

<sup>14</sup> Unlike examples elsewhere in the paper, the verb in this example lacks a H tone. This is because the verb here is in what Mwita (2008) calls the “Hodiernal past anterior focused” tense rather than the remote past. Morphologically, this appears to be a present perfective form (it lacks the past tense prefix but has a perfective suffix). This tense assigns a H tone to the third mora of the macrostem, if that mora is non-final; in this case the third mora belongs to the FV, which is phrase-final, so the H is not assigned. Note also the failure of H tone spreading from the subject onto the verb; we tentatively conclude that subject+verb is not a domain for H spreading.



show properties that are familiar from clitics cross-linguistically, in this instance the feature-coarseness property.<sup>16</sup>

#### 4.3. OM Mobility in Possessive Constructions

In this section we replicate a diagnostic identified in Bax and Diercks (2012) for the clitic nature of OMs in Manyika. One hallmark of clitic morphemes is that they display some degree of morphosyntactic mobility, that is to say, they are not as strictly restricted in their syntactic position as ‘pure’ agreement morphemes (see van Riemsdijk 1999 for discussion of this with respect to Indo-European clitics). This is familiar from Indo-European clitics, like the example in (38) from Spanish where clitics occur in a different position in imperatives than in declaratives:

- (38) a. Ellos                    cantarán                    aquella canción.  
           they                    3pl.FUT.sing            that            song  
           ‘They will sing that song.’
- b. Ellos    **la**            cantarán.  
           they    CL            3pl.FUT.sing  
           ‘They will sing it (that song).’
- c. ¡Cánten=**la**!  
           3pl.IMP.sing=CL  
           ‘Sing it!’

The main point here is that one property of clitics that distinguishes them from canonical agreement morphemes is their ability to occur in different morphosyntactic positions. Bax and Diercks (2012) showed that in Manyika, OMs occur in different positions in possessive constructions as compared to non-possessives, a pattern that is replicated in Kuria. As in Manyika, Kuria possessive constructions are essentially a combination of a copula and a prepositional phrase (‘be with’ possessives).

- (39)    n-aa-ré                    ní-íri-hwá  
           FOC.1sgSA-PST-be    with-5-flower  
           ‘I had a flower.’

Significant for our concerns is that when an object of a possessive is pronominalized, it does not show up as a pre-stem affix, instead appearing as an enclitic on the prepositional element.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> An anonymous reviewer rightly notes that the specific formulation of the coarseness property of clitic doubling here does not strictly allow a diagnostic conclusion when there *is* full representation of phi-features; rather, we can only know that it is *not* clitic doubling when there is *not* full phi-feature representation. Nonetheless, two observations are relevant here. First is that there is a clear distinction in the properties of subject markers and object markers with respect to (non-)feature-coarseness, which an agreement vs. clitic analysis readily explains given the feature coarseness diagnostic for clitics. Second, the representation of two full sets of phi features in the conjoined object cases is somewhat extraordinary, with the realization of two OMs for a single conjoined object. So while the critique is not invalid, the combination of exceptional realization of two sets of phi-features in object marking a conjoined object, along with the distinction between subject markers and OMs, leads us to conclude that this is (again) a pattern of properties familiar from clitics in other languages as distinct from (pure) agreement morphemes—the data are readily explained on the clitic vs. agreement line of argumentation, and it is not obvious what would explain the pattern otherwise.

<sup>17</sup> The reader may notice the different morphological form of the postverbal object marker: this is a recurring fact across many Bantu languages with similar patterns (e.g. Manyika and Swahili). We assume that this is allomorphy related to the OM’s word-final position.

- (40) n-aa-ré ná-ryo  
 FOC.1sgSA-PST-be with-5OM  
 ‘I had it.’

Bax and Diercks (2012) demonstrate that in Manyika these postverbal OMs in possessives show the same general distribution as pre-stem OMs with respect to when doubling is possible or not; given the particular distribution of OM doubling in Kuria (ruled out in monotransitives) it is not possible to replicate the doubling patterns of OMs in possessives.

The only case in Kuria where doubling of an OM is possible in a monotransitive is with free pronouns in object position (and there are no ditransitive possessive constructions to our knowledge); example (41) shows that it is in fact possible to double a pronoun in object position despite the fact that it is impossible to double a full noun phrase (41)b.

- (41) a. n-aa-ré ná-ryó ryo  
 FOC.1sgSA-be with-5OM 5it  
 ‘I had it.’
- b. \*n-aa-re na-ryo iri-hwa  
 FOC.1sgSA-PST-be with-5OM 5-flower  
 Intended: ‘I had the flower.’

As with the optionality and feature-coarseness diagnostics, we interpret the morphosyntactic mobility of Kuria OMs as evidence that these elements ought to be identified with the class of syntactic elements that are considered clitics cross-linguistically, and therefore subject to cliticization analyses (see Ranero et al 2014 for analysis of Kuria specifically).<sup>18</sup>

#### 4.4. OM Mobility in Ordering of OMs

In the spirit of demonstrating the morphosyntactic mobility of OMs, another pattern that is relevant is that when there are multiple OMs on a verb, their relative order is not predetermined. The examples below are from Ranero et al (2014):

- (42) omo-óná n-aa-**mú**-gé-gá-ráágír:-ííy-i  
 1-child FOC-1SA.PST-**1OM-4OM-6OM**-eat.APPL-CAUS.PF-FV  
 ‘The child fed it (the cat) it (the milk) for him (the chief).’

- (43) OMs may occur in any order
- ✓ omoóná naa-**mú**-gá-gé-ráágír:ííyi
  - ✓ omoóná naa-gé-**mú**-gá-ráágír:ííyi
  - ✓ omoóná naa-gé-gá-**mú**-ráágír:ííyi
  - ✓ omoóná naa-gá-**mú**-gé-ráágír:ííyi
  - ✓ omoóná naa-gá-gé-**mú**-ráágír:ííyi

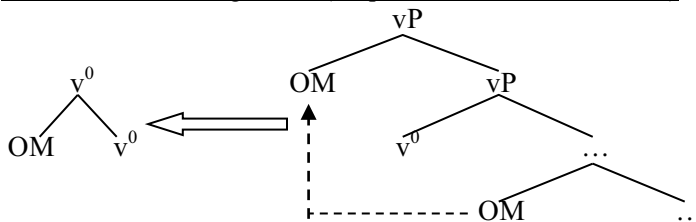
<sup>18</sup> An anonymous reviewer posed the question of *why* exactly clitics are more mobile than pure agreement affixes – what is it about cliticization processes that distinguish them from agreement affixes? We do not explore this issue here as our main concern is the empirical classification of Kuria OMs as clitic morphemes, and in general the main claim of the paper is simply that Kuria OMs behave like elements in unrelated languages that are (relatively uncontroversially) labeled clitics. In saying mobility is a hallmark of clitics, then, we are simply stating that mobility is one of the properties of clitics that traditionally have caused researchers to identify morphemes as clitics in the first place, as opposed to morphemes that *do not* have those properties (see van Riemsdijk 1999, Anagnostopoulou 2006). As for the explanation for this distinction, one direction of analysis is to assume that the presence of a D feature in the copying of features in an agreement process distinguishes a clitic from a pure agreement morpheme, which lacks that feature, and the D feature results in the clitic having some phrase-like properties (see van der Wal’s 2014 application of Roberts’ 2010 ideas to Bantu OMing as an analysis in this vein). An explanatory analysis of the mobility of clitics goes beyond the scope of this paper, however.

Without considering the particular analyses of this variable morpheme ordering, the mere fact that OMs are ordered freely with respect to each other suggests a degree of morphosyntactic independence that is unexpected on an analysis of these morphemes as solely agreement affixes.<sup>19</sup> We refer the reader to Ranero et al (2014) for more details about the ordering and derivation of object markers on the verb.

## 5. Cliticization inside the verb form

In the preceding subsections we provided mainly syntactic or morphosyntactic evidence for the analysis that we had been assuming to this point in the paper, that Kuria OMs are clitic elements. This raises an important point, however: if clitics are syntactically-independent elements, their classification as clitics crucially relies on demonstrating some degree of phonological dependence. So there ought to be some evidence that demonstrates that OM clitics are morphophonologically dependent on the verb stem. In one sense this is obvious, as OMs appear internal to the verbal form (with various inflectional prefixes preceding it on the inflected verb), but there should nonetheless be evidence that the OM and the stem (root+suffixes) form a morphological/phonological unit. The analysis advanced by Ranero et al (2014) is that this cliticization process happens at the vP level syntactically, preceding affixation of the higher tense/agreement; the tree in (44) shows the proposed process where movement of an OM to the edge of vP is followed by an m-merger process that creates the complex head OM-v (see Matushansky 2006, Harizanov to appear, and Kramer to appear). Therefore we take the vP phase to be a plausible syntactic correlate of the edge of the morphological stem in Kuria verbs.

(44) Cliticization at the edge of vP (adapted from Ranero et al 2014)



The verb stem (verb root + suffixes) is a commonly assumed unit across Bantu languages. In Kuria, as in other Bantu languages, some evidence for the stem comes from reduplication. As detailed in Mwita (2008: 231 *et seq*), the stem (meaning the verb root and everything following it in the verb, including derivational suffixes and the FV) is the unit targeted by verbal reduplication in Kuria. Reduplication copies all or part of the stem, and the reduplicated material is prefixed to the stem, as in *oko-héétó-héétók-a* ~ *oko-héétóká-héétók-a* ‘to remember repeatedly’ (reduplicant is underlined; Mwita 2008: 233). Prefixes that occur before the stem are not included in the reduplicant.<sup>20</sup> This suggests that the stem is a viable morphophonological unit that can be targeted for cliticization.

The notion that the OM+stem (referred to as the ‘macrostem’) is a distinct unit from the material that precedes it is also a well-established idea in the Bantuist tradition. Ngonyani (1999) uses this notion to explain the fact that relativizing morphemes in Swahili (plausibly C heads) may appear internal to the verbal form, between subject agreement/tense and OMs. To defend this claim he draws on evidence from the historical development of tense morphemes, stress assignment, and the fact that

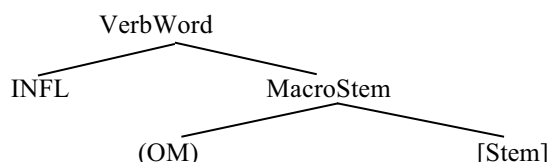
<sup>19</sup> Note that we are not claiming that a fixed ordering of morphemes would be evidence against a clitic analysis, only that the morphosyntactic mobility that allows them to be freely ordered is consistent with a cliticization analysis and less expected if they were strictly agreement affixes, which have generally been observed to have a more restrictive morphosyntactic distribution (van Riemsdijk 1999).

<sup>20</sup> The only exception is that a tense or OM prefix may be included in the reduplicant if necessary to fulfill a disyllabic minimality constraint on reduplicants (i.e., if the stem has fewer than two syllables), as in *tá-móha-mo-h-à* ‘(do) give him repeatedly’ (Mwita 2008: 238). The inclusion of prefixes in the reduplicant is prohibited if the stem has two or more syllables (e.g., *oko-mó-róma-róm-a* ‘to bite him repeatedly’; \**oko-moroma-mo-roma* (Mwita 2008: 247)).

some speakers in informal writing often leave a space between the tense+agreement constituent and the OM+stem constituent, despite the standard orthography not following this norm (see Henderson 2006, Keach 1980, and Julien 2002 for similar kinds of analyses in Swahili and Shona).

It has also been long established that the OM+stem in Bantu verbs is a *phonologically* relevant domain. Grammatical tone assignment, tonal phonology, and/or phonological minimality restrictions refer to the macrostem in Bantu languages including Shambaa (Odden 1982), Namwanga (Bickmore 2000), Makaa (Heath 2003), Zulu (Buell 2005), Khayo (Marlo 2009), and many others. The following structure is commonly assumed for the Bantu verb (simplified from Downing 2003):

(45) Structure of the Bantu verb



In Kuria, there is clear evidence from tone assignment for OM+stem as a distinct unit within the verb. As discussed at length in Mwita (2008) and Marlo et al (2014), tense-aspect-mood-polarity (henceforth ‘tense’) distinctions in Kuria are marked in part by the assignment of a high (H) tone to specific positions in the verb; as in many other languages, these positions are determined relative to the edge of the macrostem. The Inceptive (‘be about to do X’), for example, assigns a H tone to the fourth mora of the macrostem. As shown in (46), when no OMs are present, the stem and macrostem boundaries coincide, so the H appears on the fourth mora of the stem (it then spreads rightward to the penultimate syllable via regular H tone spreading; see Mwita (2008) and Marlo et al (2014) for details). The vowel targeted by the tense-specific H tone assignment rule is underlined here and in the examples below.

- (46) to-ra-[hɔ́tɔ́tér-a]  
 1plSA-INCEP-[reassure-FV]  
 ‘We are about to reassure (someone).’

Example (47)a shows that when an OM is present, the H tone assignment rule begins ‘counting’ moras starting with the OM – i.e., the left edge of the macrostem – so now the H tone appears on the third syllable of the stem (which is the fourth mora of the macrostem). (47)b gives further evidence for the analysis; with the addition of a second OM, the H tone is still assigned to the fourth mora of the macrostem – now the second mora of the stem.

- (47) a. to-ra-[mu-hɔ́tɔ́tér-a]                      b. to-ra-[mu-ba-hɔ́tɔ́tér-a]  
 1plSA-INCEP-[1OM-reassure-FV]              1plSA-INCEP-[1OM-2OM-reassure.APPL-FV]  
 ‘We are about to reassure him.’              ‘We are about to reassure him for them (the women).’

The data in (48) confirm the analysis by exemplifying the same phenomenon in a different tense, the Remote Future, which assigns H tone to the third mora of the macrostem. Again, the counting begins at the left edge of the macrostem, so that the H tone shifts relative to the stem boundary depending on the presence of OMs. With no OMs present, the H tone appears on the third mora of the stem (48)a; with one OM present, the H tone appears on the second mora of the stem (48)b; and with two OMs present, the H tone appears on the first mora of the stem (48)c.

- (48) a. n-to-re-[hɔ́tɔ́tér-a]                      b. n-to-re-[mu-hɔ́tɔ́tér-a]  
 FOC-1plSA-FUT-[1OM-reassure-FV]              FOC-1plSA-FUT-[1OM-reassure-FV]  
 ‘We will reassure (someone).’              ‘We will reassure him.’



- c. n-to-re-[mu-ba-hóótóótér:-a]  
 FOC-1pLSA-FUT-[1OM-2OM-reassure.APPL-FV]  
 ‘We will reassure him for them (the women).’

This is therefore a classic type of evidence for the morphophonological constituent noted in (45), the macrostem: rules of tone assignment in Kuria must refer to a constituent portion of the verb that consists of the object markers and stem, to the exclusion of the higher inflections. We interpret these facts as evidence for the spellout of OMs in Kuria as clitics at the edge of a morphosyntactic constituent, the  $\nu$ P phase, and forming a phonological domain distinct from the affixes that are added at a later point in the derivation.

## 6. Conclusions

The morphosyntactic nature of Bantu OMs continues to be a domain of productive research. This paper has taken up the claim that Kuria OMs should be analyzed as clitics, the same sort of element as clitics in Indo-European languages. After describing the basic patterns of OM doubling in Kuria (the  $n+1$  effect) we showed that OM-doubled objects are in fact *in-situ* within the verb phrase, displaying true instances of OM/clitic doubling (as opposed to being dislocated objects). We then gave a variety of morphological, syntactic, and phonological evidence that Kuria OMs are clitics. We showed that Kuria OMs display the properties of clitics as opposed to agreement affixes (optionality, feature coarseness) and also display one of the hallmark properties of clitic morphemes, morphosyntactic mobility (in possessives and multiple OM constructions). We also showed that OMs form a morphophonological unit with the target of their affixation (the verbal stem), forming a larger unit (the macrostem), a domain that is specifically referenced by some processes of tone assignment, arguing that this is an additional form of evidence that despite morphosyntactic independence (relative to other affixed elements), Kuria OMs nonetheless show the kind of morphophonological dependence on other morphological units that is familiar from clitics cross-linguistically.

Our conclusion, then, is that Kuria OMs ought to be analyzed as clitics (intermediate elements between agreement affixes and independent pronouns), rather than being analyzed as agreement affixes. They show a similar mix of morphosyntactic and morphophonological properties to those of clitics in Indo-European languages, and therefore future research on Bantu OMs will benefit from similar kinds of analyses to those that have been given to clitics cross-linguistically. We have not taken up at all the specific syntactic derivation of these morphemes in this paper; we refer the reader to Ranero et al (2014) for that discussion. But the conclusions here serve to document the general properties of Kuria OMing and take a step toward analyzing them in light of their correlates in other languages.

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