

Sesotho direct relative qualifiers: Why simple things become complex

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Sesotho has different types of sentences, including simple, compound and complex sentences. Most scholars who have an interest in the complex sentences claim that such sentences entail both main and subordinate clauses, and that the latter is embodied by complementisers. However, few researchers have addressed direct relative qualifier complexity in a sentence. As simple as the direct relative qualifier whose stem is a verb ending in /-ng/ may seem, its usage in a sentence becomes complex. Therefore, the article seeks to explore features of the direct relative qualifiers, which lead to complexity in a sentence within the minimalist program. The article argues that Sesotho does not rely only on the complementisers, relativisers and *wh*-words to make a sentence a complex sentence. The direct relatives whose stems are verbs mark such a constituent as a subordinate clause. A sentence that has a direct relative qualifier can have one or two subjects performing more than one action. A subject moves from the [spec-VP] to [spec-TP] to become the subject of the entire sentence. The article concludes that the direct relatives whose stems are the verbs do not qualify to be the qualifiers, but they are clauses that describe the substantives in a sentence.

Keywords: complexity, complex sentence, simplicity relativiser; clause.

Introduction

Sesotho (S.33), according to Guthrie's taxonomy of Bantu languages, is a member of the Sotho-Tswana (S.30) group, which belongs to the South-Eastern Zone (Doke, 1954). This language is spoken by the Basotho in the Kingdom of Lesotho, where it is both official and national language; in the Republic of South Africa, where it is one of the 12 official languages; and in the Republic of Zimbabwe, where it is one of the 16 official languages.

As a member of the Bantu languages, Sesotho follows a subject, verb and object (SVO) word order (Demuth, 1987). A subject and object can be in the form of a substantive (a noun or pronoun), or a clause. Both nouns and pronouns can function as a stand-alone in a sentence, or they can be modified by different qualifiers, commonly known as qualificatives, in a sentence. According to Brown and Miller (2013), a qualifier is derived from the Late Latin word *qualificare*, meaning 'to define' or 'to describe'. Therefore, a qualifier is used to qualify, define, or describe somebody or something. Again, qualifiers are prohibited from preceding the focus (substantive) (Imrényi, 2008). Similarly, a term, qualificative, refers to the part of speech, which is used to qualify, describe, or modify a substantive in a sentence (Thetso, 2018). For this article, the terms qualifiers and qualificatives are used interchangeably. Even though some scholars, such as Brown and Miller (2013: 367), view qualificative/qualification as 'an old-fashioned term for modification, particularly modification of a noun', the terms are similar. Sesotho has six types of qualificatives,

namely adjectives, possessives, quantifiers, enumeratives, demonstratives and relatives.

Sesotho has a salient feature, which is common to other Bantu languages, which is a noun class system. According to Machobane (2010), in Bantu languages, nouns and pronouns belong to different classes known as grammatical class-genders; however, it should be noted that the concept of *class-genders* is not about sex-bases (sex) (Doke, 1954; Corbett, 1991). Grammatical class-genders as supported by Doke are that many Bantu languages are inflectional, thus making use of prefixes, suffixes, and sometimes internal vowel changes. Therefore, the nouns in Sesotho are classified according to their prefixes (Sharpe, 1960) while pronouns are distributed based on the nouns that they agree with in number. These prefixes of the nouns control and agree in number with their target genders, that is, genders used in combination with other categories, such as different qualifiers and verbs (Corbett, 1991). This implies that, in Sesotho, there is a concordial agreement in a sentence structure, and 'all pronouns, qualifying words and predicates relating to a noun assume a prefixal element in agreement with that noun' (Doke, 1954: 47). Therefore, it can be concluded that, in Bantu languages, the substantives trigger agreement within (qualifiers) and outside (verbs/verbal unit) (Thetso, 2018). These qualifiers have two parts: qualificative agreement (concord) and qualificative stems, and the first part is the one that triggers agreement with the nouns and pronouns. Nouns, absolute pronouns and target genders are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Nouns and their target genders

| Noun class | Noun prefix | Absolute pronoun | Subject agreement | Object agreement | Direct relative agreement | Indirect relative agreement |
|------------|-------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 | <i>mo-</i> | <i>Eena</i> | <i>-o-</i> | <i>-mo-</i> | <i>-ea-</i> | <i>-eo-</i> |
| 1(a) | Ø- | <i>Eena</i> | <i>-o-</i> | <i>-mo-</i> | <i>-ea-</i> | <i>-eo-</i> |
| 2 | <i>ba-</i> | <i>Bona</i> | <i>-ba-</i> | <i>-ba-</i> | <i>-ba-</i> | <i>-bao-</i> |
| 2(a) | <i>bo-</i> | <i>Bona</i> | <i>-ba-</i> | <i>-ba-</i> | <i>-ba-</i> | <i>-bao-</i> |
| 3 | <i>mo-</i> | <i>Oona</i> | <i>-o-</i> | <i>-o-</i> | <i>-o-</i> | <i>-oo-</i> |
| 4 | <i>me-</i> | <i>Eona</i> | <i>-e-</i> | <i>-e-</i> | <i>-e-</i> | <i>-eo-</i> |
| 5 | <i>le-</i> | <i>Lona</i> | <i>-le-</i> | <i>-le-</i> | <i>-le-</i> | <i>-leo-</i> |
| 6 | <i>ma-</i> | <i>'ona</i> | <i>-a-</i> | <i>-a-</i> | <i>-a-</i> | <i>-ao-</i> |
| 7 | <i>se-</i> | <i>Sona</i> | <i>-se-</i> | <i>-se-</i> | <i>-se-</i> | <i>-seo-</i> |
| 8 | <i>li-</i> | <i>Tsona</i> | <i>-li-</i> | <i>-li-</i> | <i>-tse-</i> | <i>-tseo-</i> |
| 9 | <i>N-</i> | <i>Eona</i> | <i>-e-</i> | <i>-e-</i> | <i>-e-</i> | <i>-eo-</i> |
| 10 | <i>li-</i> | <i>Tsona</i> | <i>-li-</i> | <i>-li-</i> | <i>-tse-</i> | <i>-tseo-</i> |
| 14 | <i>bo-</i> | <i>Bona</i> | <i>-bo-</i> | <i>-bo-</i> | <i>-bo-</i> | <i>-boo-</i> |
| 15 | <i>ho-</i> | <i>Hona</i> | <i>-ho-</i> | <i>-ho-</i> | <i>-ho-</i> | <i>-hoo-</i> |

(Adapted from Guma, 1971; Lekhotla la Sesotho, 1981)

Table 1 demonstrates the noun classes and their prefixes, as well as their target genders. As can be seen, the noun class system in Sesotho has 15 classes, and these are divided into singular and plural. The first class is singular, while the second one is plural. This means that the first classes that are odd numbers, i.e. 1, 1(a), 3, 5, 7 and 9, are in singular form, whereas the last classes, which are even numbers, i.e. 2, 2(a), 4, 6, 8 and 10, are in plural form. However, there are some nouns that cannot be counted, such as *bosula* 'tastelessness' and *botho* 'human kindness' in class 14, like nouns in class 15 which neither denote singularity nor plurality. The target genders illustrated in the table include absolute pronouns, subject agreement, object agreement and both direct and indirect relative qualifiers. All these target genders agree in number with the noun classes.

Most remarkably, the noun class system has a role in the formation of different relative qualifiers. This implies that every noun class agrees in number with the relative agreement. The strong agreement between the substantives and relative qualifiers denotes that the former can be described or modified by the latter. The evidence is seen in example (1).

- (1a) **Mosali ea botsoa o tsamaile maobane.**
 Sub [1-woman Rel-lazy] VP [1-Agr Perf-leave Adv-yesterday]
 'A lazy woman left yesterday.'
- (1b) **'Ona ao Lerato a buang ka 'ona ke a 'muso.**
 Sub [6-those Rel-that Lerato is talking about] VP [COP- they are the government's]
 'Those that Lerato is talking about are the government's.'

In example 1(a), a substantive functioning as a subject is the noun *mosali* 'a woman', which is described by a direct relative qualifier *ea botsoa* 'lazy'. *-ea-* is a direct relative agreement, while *botsoa* 'lazy' is a direct relative stem.

Mosali 'woman' is a noun in class 1 as its prefix is */mo-/*, and it agrees in number with its target genders *-ea-* (relative agreement) and *-o-* (subjective agreement), correspondingly. In 1(b), *'ona* 'those' is an absolute pronoun in class 6, which functions as a subject. It is modified by the indirect relative qualifier *ao Lerato a buang ka 'ona* 'that Lerato is talking about', of which *-ao-* is an indirect relative agreement. *-ao-* is an indirect relative agreement, whereas *Lerato a buang ka 'ona* is an indirect relative stem. *-a-* in both the embedded clause (complementiser clause) *ao Lerato a buang ka 'ona* 'that Lerato is talking about' and the matrix clause *ke a 'muso* 'they are the government's' are objective agreement. All the target genders *-ao-* and *-a-* agree in number with their corresponding absolute pronoun *'ona*. According to Doke and Mofokeng (1957) and Moeketsi et al. (1994; quoted by Mischke, 1997), this relative agreement functions as a relativiser.

A noteworthy attribute of the relative qualificative is that its stem does not only constitute a morpheme or a word, but also a group of words, which is a predicate, as seen in example (1). For instance, the relative stem includes the following types: primitive relative stems; nouns used as relative stems; complex nouns used as relative stems; and adverbs and verb stems with the relative suffix *-ng*. The relative stems as predicates (verbs) is highlighted by Guma (1971: 111), who says that the relatives that are 'built on verb stems are basically predicative', and that the stems of this kind are categorised into direct and indirect relative qualifiers. A direct relative qualifier, which is key in this article, seems to be simple, yet it is complex, as illustrated in (2) below.

- (2) **Banana ba binang ba fihlile.**
 2-girls Rel- who are singing Pred [2-AgrS Perf arrive]
 'The girls who are singing have arrived'.

In example (2), *ba binang* 'who are singing' is a relative qualifier, which describes a noun *banana* 'girls'. *-Ba-* is in direct relative agreement, while *binang* is a stem composed of a verb *bina* 'sing', which is extended by a relative suffix *-ng* (Mischke, 1997). *Ba fihlile* 'have arrived' is a predicate of an entire sentence; however, looking at the relative qualifier, *ba binang*, is not just an ordinary qualifier, it is also a predicate (Guma, 1971). This means that there are two actions in this sentence: an action of singing and arriving respectively. The notion of two predicates is of interest in such a construction.

A predicate, which is another part of a sentence containing a verb, is considered crucial as it gives more information about the subject. It may further be divided into a verb or verbal unit and an object. Following Doke and Mofokeng (1957), Machobane (2010) states that for a sentence to have a meaning, it needs a predicate. However, an interjective sentence is an exception as it does not necessarily require the predicate, yet it conveys a complete thought. Notably, the requirement of a predicate in a sentence cuts across different types of sentences in Sesotho, which are simple, compound and complex sentences. Machobane (2010) defines a simple sentence as one having one verb phrase (VP) or verbal unit (VU), as shown in example (3) below.

- (3) *Ntate o lisitse likhomo.*
 1(a)-father Pred [1(a)-AgrS Perf-look after 10-cattle]
 'A father has looked after the cattle'.

Looking at example (3), it has only one verbal unit, which is *o lisitse likhomo* 'has looked after the cattle'. This means that it states what the subject, *ntate* 'a father', is doing.

Different from a simple sentence, a compound sentence is one that has two clauses (main clauses), which have equal value (Tjabaka-Mokapane, 2021) that are joined by the following conjunctions: *empa* 'but', *feela* 'but, however', *hape* 'again', *athe* 'whereas, yet', *joale* 'now, so', *kapa* 'or' and *mohlomong* 'perhaps' (Guma, 1971; Machobane, 2010). Contrarily, a complex sentence is a sentence that has more than one clause: one is the main or matrix clause, while the other is a subordinate clause. According to Machobane (2010), a subordinate clause can have two different structures: subordinate clauses with conjunctions and subordinate clauses without conjunctions. Machobane further notes that these subordinate clauses can be noun subordinate clauses and adverbial subordinate clauses. With this classification, it can be concluded that complex sentences have more than one predicate or verbal unit. As observed in example (2) above, this is also the case with a sentence with relative qualifiers, embedding whose stem is a verb attached to the suffix indirect relative. As simple as the direct relative qualifiers whose stem is a verb stem ending in a relativiser */-ng/* may seem, its inclusion in a sentence becomes complex.

Moreover, having noticed the complexity brought by the relative qualifiers in Bantu languages, some scholars view the relative constructions as resembling both qualifiers and clauses. However, others, including Moloto (n.d.) argue that since a relative qualifier is also a clause, it should be scrapped or abolished. Mischke (1997) affirms a discrepancy caused by the relatives as he notes that some

scholars such as Doke and Mofokeng (1957) consider the direct relatives as relative clauses, while Moeketsi et al. (1994) view them as words (Mischke, 1997). To bring consensus, this research article seeks to explore features of the so-called direct relative qualifiers whose stem is a verb in Sesotho to determine the type of sentence that the construction could have and establish if they qualify to belong to the qualifiers solely, or both the qualifiers and clauses.

Sesotho direct relative qualifiers

A number of scholars have an interest in the relative constructions in Bantu languages. This claim is justified by van de Velde (2021: 981) who states that such constructions have 'received so much attention in the literature'. For instance, Muriungi and Mutange (2019) focused on the relative clauses of Kimbeere (Embo), a Kikuyu-Kamba language. They identified the following types of relative clauses: restrictive relative clauses, appositive relative clauses, direct relative clauses, indirect relative clauses, headless/free relative clauses, tenseless relative clauses and '*-ingi*' relative clauses.

In Tshiluba and Swahili, Cocchi (2004) indicated that, on average, wh-phrases in English function similarly as the affix known as a relative marker in Bantu languages. It was noted that the relative markers always agree in number with the modified substantive. However, for Nguni languages, such as Zimbabwean Ndebele, Dube (2021) highlighted that a prefix */a-/* that occurs in the relative clauses in Ndebele is a complementiser marker. There is, however, a difference between the relativiser in Nguni languages and Sesotho as the former is said to attach to the relative subject through the process of coalescence, which is not the case with Sesotho since every noun class has its own relative marker (see Table 1). Again, Nguni languages do not have a relativiser suffix */-ng/* as Sesotho. Nonetheless, the relativiser suffix */-yo/* depends on the subject.

Different from Ndebele, some scholars, such as Zerbian (2010), Letsholo and Mathaku (2014) and van de Velde (2021) focused on the tone and structure of the relative constructions in Tswana. Letsholo and Mathaku (2014) revealed that a head noun is identified at the initial position, followed by a demonstrative-like morpheme that is considered a relative marker for the relative marker originated from demonstratives. This means that demonstratives and relative markers are identical. Just like Moloto (n.d.), van de Velde (2021) perceived the so-called relative qualifier as a relative clause, which is marked by the relativiser integrated into the relative verb form. Van de Velde's study also revealed that in the structure of the Setswana noun phrase, the relative marker is the head of a complementiser phrase (CP), and the inflectional head takes a predicate phrase, not a verb phrase (VP) to accommodate reduced relatives. Comparing to other qualificatives, such as adjectives, enumerative, possessive and quantitative, Malema et al. (2022) underscored that the relatives in Setswana have shown a wider range of structures that can take negation, incorporate tense and can recursively be extended using other qualificatives, adverbs, noun phrases and verb phrases.

Following Cole (1955) and Doke and Mofokeng (1957), Leepile (1996) observed that according to the government and binding theory, both direct and indirect relative clauses in Sesotho are engaged in a movement of a WH constituent from argument position to complement position. Leepile further highlighted that /-ng/ is a relativiser, which is attached to the verb and considered the direct relative construction as an embedded sentence. Even though Leepile concentrated on the complex sentences, their focus was on the antecedent as a co-referential with the subject of the relative clause, and this raises many questions on the type of sentence that the relative construction whose stem is a verb could have.

Even though the studies have laid a foundation for the relative markers and the structure of the relative qualifiers, their focus was not on the status of the direct relative qualifiers whose stem is a verb in Sesotho. Therefore, the article intends to dig deeper into the features of the direct relative constructions whose stem is a verb in Sesotho to determine the type of sentence that they could have and establish if they qualify to belong to the qualifiers only, or both the qualifiers and clauses in the minimalist program (MP).

Minimalist program

The minimalist program was proposed by Chomsky (1995). In this theory, a sentence construction is generated from the bottom-up through the operation *merge*. With this operation, two syntactic elements are joined together to form one (Tjabaka, 2021). Therefore, the use of this operation enabled me to determine the type of sentence that the direct relative construction whose stem is a verb could have. The article also looks at the predication principle of the MP, which determines the number of arguments that each verb requires (Radford, 1997). Again, since the minimalist program has a feature of recursion, it also assisted me in establishing if indeed the direct relative constructions whose stem is a verb still qualify to be part of the qualifiers in Sesotho.

Features of the direct relative constructions

This section deals with the types of sentences that the direct relative constructions whose stems are verbs could have and the status of the relatives in Sesotho.

Types of sentences in relative constructions

The evidence in this research article reveals that there is simplicity in the direct relative qualifiers whose stems are verbs in Sesotho. In this context, the notion of simplicity, which is borrowed from Kluger (2007), means that the constructions that seem to be simple can be quite complex. Simplicity in the direct relative constructions whose stems are verbs is affirmed because they can complement prepositions in a sentence, yielding complex sentences as indicated in example (4) below.

- (4a) ...a qala ho omanyana 'Mamalou **ka mokhoa o phethahetseng** (Majara, 2009: 7).
1(a)-AgrS Inf-to V-scold 1(a)-'Mamalou P-with 3-manner Rel-which is perfect
'...she started to scold 'Mamalou in a perfect manner.'

- (4b) O ile a bua **ka mahlo a tletseng likhapha**... (Maina, 2002: 109).

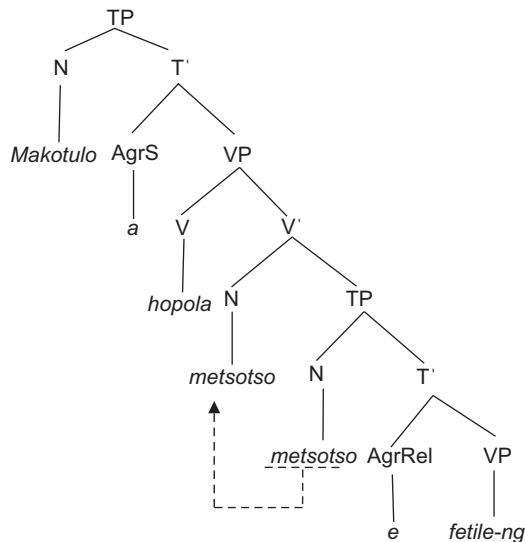
1(a) Past 1(a)-AgrO V-talk P-with 7-eyes Rel-which were full of tears
'She talked with eyes full of tears...'

In example (4), the direct relative constructions *mokhoa o phethahetseng* 'a manner which is perfect' and *mahlo a tletseng likhapha* 'eyes full of tears', complement the preposition *ka*, respectively. *O phethahetseng* 'which is perfect' in (4a) describes the noun *mokhoa* 'manner'. This means that 'Mamalou has not just been scolded ordinarily, but in a perfect manner. Similarly, *a tletseng likhapha*, 'which are full of tears' describes the noun *mahlo* 'eyes'. This means that a person described in sentence (4b) did not converse normally, but their eyes were also full of tears.

Again, in terms of the types of sentences, both sentences in (4) are complex sentences. In (4a), *a qala ho omanyana* 'Mamalou' 'she started to scold 'Mamalou' is the main clause, while *ka mokhoa o phethahetseng* 'in a perfect manner' is an adverbial subordinate clause. Within this adverbial clause, there is a relative clause *o phethahetseng* 'which is perfect'. Based on the given definition of the complex sentence, the sentence is indeed a complex one as it has one main clause and two subordinate clauses. Equally, in (4b), *o ile a bua* 'she talked' is the main clause, whereas *ka mahlo a tletseng likhapha* 'with eyes full of tears' is the adverbial subordinate clause, of which the relative clause *a tletseng likhapha* 'which are full of tears' is embedded within it. This adverbial subordinate clause modifies the main verb. Even though Machobane (2010) follows Doke and Mofokeng (1957) who only discussed adverbial subordinate clauses of location, time, reason, condition, purpose and concession, these results prove that there is also an adverbial subordinate clause of manner in Sesotho, which can have the relative clause as its embedding. This is because *ka mokhoa o phethahetseng* and *ka mahlo a tletseng likhapha* describe the main verb *omanya* 'scold' and *bua* 'talk' respectively.

In line with the predication principle, which requires every syntactic predicate to have subjects (Radford, 1997), there are three verbs in (4a) that require subjects; they include *qala* 'start', *omanya* 'scold' and *phethahetse* 'perfect'. This means that there must be someone who does the actions of starting and scolding; there must also be someone or something engaged in the action of perfecting. Therefore, it could be concluded that the sentence (4a) has three clauses: two finite clauses and one non-finite clause (infinitive clause). On the contrary, sentence (4b) has two verbs, which include *bua* 'talk' and *tletse* 'full'. Just like the verbal units in (4a), these two verbal units in (4b) also require subjects, hence the two clauses in this sentence. Following Doke and Mofokeng (1957), Moloto (n.d.) and Mischke. (1997), the direct relative constructions whose stems are verbs are not the qualifiers, but the clauses that are marked by the relativiser as highlighted by Leepile (1996) and Cocchi (2004), as seen in example (5).

- (5) *Makotulo a hopola metsotso e fetileng* (Majara, 2009: 16).



Example (5) shows the structure of the direct relative clause in a sentence. It is evidence that the relative marker /e/ and the subject agreement /a/ are similar in that they both denote agreement. However, the latter is the subject agreement (AgrS) and denotes tense, which is not the case with the former as it is a direct relative agreement (AgrRel) that relativises the noun *metsotso* 'minutes' and its relative stem *fetileng* 'passed'. The article does not conform to the findings of van de Velde (2021), which perceived the relative marker as a complementiser marking the complementiser clause, but the article views the relative marker as AgrRel. It is worth noting that the noun *metsotso* 'minutes' originates from the lower tense phrase (TP); therefore, it moved from the specifier [spec, TP] to V-bar to become an object of the main clause as the verb *hopola* 'remember' also requires an internal argument.

Moreover, a datum reflected on the structure in (5) also indicates that even if the direct relative constructions do not complement any preposition, they are still complex sentences since they have more than one clause. In this example, there is a main clause *Makotulo a hopola metsotso* 'Makotulo remembered the minutes' and a reduced relative clause *e fetileng* 'which have passed'. The latter is a reduced clause because it modifies an implicit relative noun. Therefore, it can be concluded that the relatives are subordinate clauses.

Different from the movement of the subject from the [spec, VP] to occupy the position of an object in V-bar, the findings depict that the subject of the direct relative whose stem is a verb can originate from the lower TP as indicated in example (6) below.

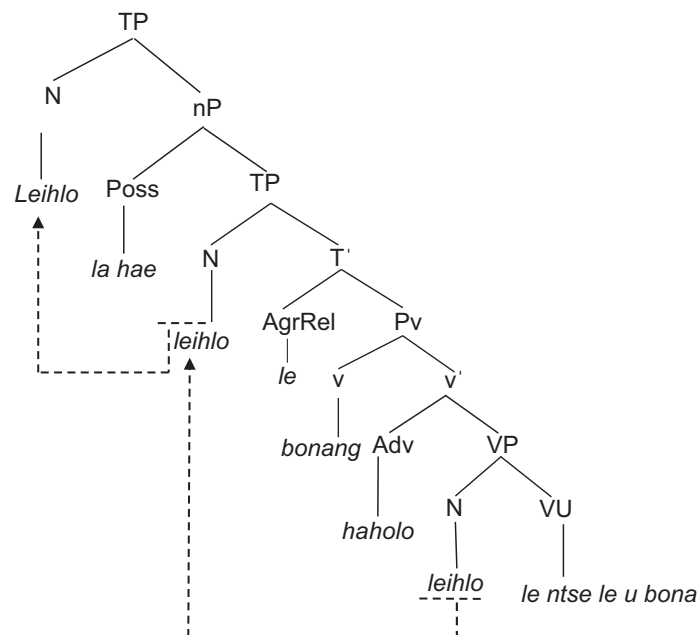
- (6) *Leihlo la hae le bonang haholo le ntse le bona*
(Majara, 2009: 14).
His omniscient eye is still looking at you

Example (6) demonstrate the subject of the direct relative construction *leihlo la hae le bonang haholo, le ntse le u bona* 'his omniscient eye is still looking at you'. From the given notation in (6), a noun *leihlo* 'eye' originates from the lower VP ([spec, VP], where it has moved successively to the lower TP ([Spec, TP]), leaving its copy to satisfy the predication principle as the verb *bona* 'look' requires an external argument, that is, something which does the action of looking. Then it leaves another copy and moves to the initial position of the sentence to satisfy both the predication principle and extended project principle (EPP), which states that every clause must contain a subject. Therefore, the structure still shows that the sentence is not a simple one, but a complex sentence.

The status of the relative constructions in Sesotho

The issue that the direct relatives, whose stems are verbs, are subordinate clauses, again justifies that such relatives are not the qualifiers. This is because the qualifiers are

His omniscient eye is still looking at you



words that modify substantives. Contrarily, the direct relatives, whose stems are verbs, are clauses because they have both subject and a predicate. Since the MP has a recursion property that allows structures to have multiple instances to yield larger structures, the direct relative clauses can therefore recursively be complemented by qualificative pronouns, prepositional phrases, adverbs, nouns and verb phrases, as illustrated in example (7) below.

- (7a) ...mekhoa eohle e mebe **e lihetseng** [ba bangata bolibeng ba litsietsi le matšoenyeho] (Majara, 2009: 7).
4-ways Quant-all Adj-bad Rel-which have tracked Rel-many Loc-deep down Rel- hardships Conj-and 6-burdens
'All bad ways have trapped many deep down in hardships and burdens.'
- (7b) Ke ne ke le nku **e balehang** [pel'a Molisa e motle] (Majara, 2009: 9).
1P-AgrS Past Cop-ke-le 9-sheep Rel-run away P-near N-Shepherd Adj-good
'I was a sheep that ran from a good Shepherd?.'
- (7c) Bahlankana **ba kenang** [moo ...] (Maina, 2002: 7).
2-young men Rel-attend Adv-there
'Young men who attend there...'
- (7d) E ne e le serapa **se khahlang** [mahlo] (Maina, 2002: 103).
Exp-it Past Cop-e le 7-garden Rel-attract 6-eye
'It was a garden that attracts the eye.'
- (7e) Makotulo, **a kileng** [a poqa kateng...a siile li-sala-li-eme], ntho tse talimiloeng [ka mahlo] (Majara, 2009: 7)
1(a)-Makotulo Rel-who has once messed up 1(a)-AgrS V-left 10-mess 9-thing Rel-seen PP-by eyes
'Makotulo, who has messed up before, leaving everyone shocked, things seen by the naked eyes.'

Example (7) exemplifies that the property of recursiveness enables the direct relatives whose stems are verbs to have a number of complements, including qualificative pronouns, prepositional phrases, adverbs and nouns. The relative clause *e lihetseng* 'trapped' in (7a) is complemented by a relative pronoun *ba bangata* 'many' followed by a locative *bolibeng* 'deep down', which is also complemented by the conjoined relative qualifier *ba litsietsi le matšoenyeho* 'hardships and burdens'. In (7b), the relative clause *e balehang* 'ran way' is complemented by the prepositional phrase *pel'a Molisa e motle* 'good shepherd', while in (7c), the relative clause *ba kenang* 'attending' is complemented by an adverb *moo* 'there'. In (7d), the relative clause *se khahlang* 'attracts', is complemented by the noun *mahlo* 'eyes', while in (7e), the relative clause *Makotulo, a kileng* is complemented by a VP *a poqa kateng...a siile li-sala-li-eme*. Another identified relative clause is *ntho tse talimiloeng*, which is also complemented by the prepositional phrase *ka mahlo*.

This kind of complementation is supported by Malema et al. (2022), who affirm that the relative clauses can be extended using qualifiers, adverbs, and noun and verb phrases. Apart from their view, Machobane (2010) notes that, on the one hand, a verb phrase can have the

following complements: noun phrases (noun or pronoun), copulatives, or adverbs. On the other hand, Machobane states that a qualifier can be an adjective, demonstrative, enumerative, possessive and relative and they do not have complements. However, Thetso (2018) emphasises that the qualifiers are recursive, allowing more than one qualifier in a single phrase. This implies that they do not allow any form of complements except for other qualifiers and ideophones.

The article has also discovered that the direct relative whose stem is a verb is not only restrictive, but also non-restrictive. A restrictive clause is essential, while a non-restrictive is not. In written communication, there is a comma before and after such a clause. Therefore, the clause is also identified in Sesotho as exemplified in (7e) where the relative clause *a kileng a poqa kateng...a siile li-sala-li-eme* is separated by the comma from its relative subject or noun *Makotulo* and its counterpart *ntho tse talimiloeng ka mahlong* 'things that are seen by eyes'. Besides, the verb relative stem allows verbal extension, that is, the radicals extended by suffixes. In the clause *ntho tse talimiloeng ka mahlong* 'things that are seen by eyes', the verb *talimile* has been extended to the passive -o- resulting in *talimiloe*; hence, the verb *talimileng* changes to *talimiloeng*. The fact that the non-restrictive clause can be recognised as a type of direct relative whose stem is a verb (Muriungi & Mutange, 2019) justifies that such relatives are clauses. In addition, the verbal extension is only seen in the predicate (verbal radicals); as a result, it is concluded that the direct relatives whose stems are verbs are clauses, not qualifiers.

Most remarkably, even though some direct relative clauses are tenseless (Muriungi & Mutange, 2019), they, however, take tense as also demonstrated by Malema et al. (2022). In (7a and e), an action of trapping has already occurred and finished in the past (perfect tense), while in (7b-d), the action of running away, attending and attracting correspondingly denotes present tense. As the tense (true tense) can be identified in the predicate, the results confirm that the direct relative clause is a clause, not a qualifier. The evidence also demonstrates that the direct relative clause takes an objective agreement, and this feature is only seen in a predicate. This view is noted in example (8).

- (8) ...a ka fumana mohlankana ea **mo nyalang**... (Maina, 2002: 107).
1(a)-AgrS-ka V-find 1-boyfriend 1-AgrRel 1-AgrO RelS-marry
'She can find a boyfriend who marries her.'

Example (8) shows the direct relative (whose stem is the verb), which has incorporated the object agreement. According to Guma (1971), an object concord is the morpheme that agrees in gender and person with an object of the predicate. He further emphasises that, unlike the subject agreement, the object agreement is not compulsory. However, whenever it is used, it comes between the subject agreement and verb or radical. Following Guma, the object marker *mo-* is also identified in the relative clause *ea mo nyalang* 'who marries her'. This implies that the inclusion of the object agreement is the feature that can only be seen in the predicates. From this observation, it could therefore be established that the relative

construction is indeed a clause as it has both a subject and predicate that can incorporate the object agreement.

The data have further revealed that the direct relatives whose stems are the verb also take /sa/ as one form of negation of the principal forms. This implies that negation is also one element of the predicate, as illustrated in example (9).

- (9) *'Mè ke eena motho ea sa omeng mathe...* (Maina, 2002: 18).
 1(a)-mother 1P-Cop 1-PRON 1-person 1-AgrRel
 Neg-not RelS-dry 6-saliva
 'Mother is the person whose saliva does not dry up.'

Example (9) reflects the direct relative clause whose stem is a verb, which is merged with a negative form /sa/. Guma (1971) states that /sa/ is one of the conjugations of the prefixal radical that marks negation. As the morpheme is only identified in the predicate, this finding also supports Moloto's (n.d.) and Mischke's (1997) idea that the direct

relatives whose stems are the verbs are clauses, not qualifiers. To prove these claims from examples (4) to (9), a summary of the features of some qualifiers in Sesotho is given in Table 2.

In Table 2, it should be noted that even though different qualifiers, including adjectives, possessive, direct relatives whose stems are nouns and demonstratives can be negated, they do not take the same form as other predicate negations. This is evidenced when /se/, which is known as an indicative participial and subjunctive negation (principal form of negation), is attached to the morpheme /-ng/ (negative suffix). The negation of these qualifiers, except for the direct relatives whose stem is a verb, changes the construction to negation of the indirect relatives. Therefore, the article maintains that the direct relatives whose stems are verbs are not the qualifiers; however, they are the clauses that describe or give more information about the substantives.

Table 2: Features of the qualifiers in Sesotho

| Qualifier | Example | Gloss | Features of qualifiers |
|------------------------------------|---|--|--|
| Adjective | ... <i>ba tšela letamo ka mahlo a matšo...</i> (Majara, 2009: 34) | 'They crossed a dam with black eyes.' | <i>A matšo</i> 'black' is an adjective that describes a noun <i>mahlo</i> 'eyes' in terms of colour. Regarding complementation, this adjective can be followed by an ideophone <i>tšo!</i> to resemble the extent to which the eyes are black. Therefore, the construction could read: <i>ba tšela letamo ka mahlo a matšo tšo!</i> 'they crossed a dam with black eyes'. The extract is in affirmative form; however, when the adjective construction is negated, it becomes: <i>ba tšela letamo ka mahlo a seng matšo</i> 'they crossed a dam with eyes, which are not black'. This form of negation differs from other predicate negations, which make use of the morpheme /sa/. The negation has now changed the construction to the indirect relative qualifier ... <i>mahlo a seng matšo...</i> 'eyes, which are not black', whose primitive affirmative form, is <i>mahlo a leng matšo</i> 'eyes, which are black.' |
| Possessive | ... <i>a talima tšupa-nako ea hae...</i> (Maina, 2002: 2) | 'She looked at her watch'. | The excerpt is in an affirmative form. When changing the possessive construction to negation, it could read: <i>a talima tšupa-nako eo e seng ea hae</i> 'she looked at a watch that is not hers'. Just like the adjective construction above, this form of negation differs from other predicate negations which use the morpheme /sa/. <i>Tšupa-nako eo e seng ea hae</i> 'a watch that is not hers' has now become the indirect relative qualifier, whose primitive affirmative form is <i>tšupa-nako eo e leng ea hae...</i> 'a watch that is hers'. |
| Descriptive possessive (noun stem) | ... <i>bana ba mofuta [ona] ba atisa ho tlohela litokelo...</i> (Majara, 2009: 12) | The children of this kind normally forsake their responsibilities. | The descriptive possessive qualifier <i>bana ba mofuta ona ba atisa ho tlohela litokelo</i> , whose stem is a noun <i>mofuta</i> 'kind', is complemented by other qualifier, which is a demonstrative <i>ona</i> 'this' as supported by Thetso (2018) that the demonstrative qualifiers can occupy different positions: it can precede the possessives, or come after the possessives as seen in this example. The extract is in the affirmative form. When looking at the direct relative construction's negation, whose stem is a noun, it becomes <i>bana bao e seng ba mofuta ona ba atisa ho tlohela litokelo</i> 'The children of this kind normally forsake their responsibilities.' Similar to the adjective and possessive qualifiers above, the negation of the direct relatives, whose stem is a noun, becomes the indirect relative qualifier, whose primitive affirmative form is ... <i>bana bao e leng ba mofuta ona...</i> 'children who are of this kind'. |
| Demonstrative | ... <i>taba ena ea khitla Makotulo haholo...</i> (Majara, 2009: 12) | 'This issue hurt Makotulo excessively'. | The extract is in the affirmative form. To negate the demonstrative qualifier, it becomes, <i>taba eo e seng ena ea khitla Makotulo haholo</i> 'the issue, which is not this one, hurt Makotula excessively'. Just like the aforementioned qualifiers, the negation of demonstratives becomes the indirect relative construction, whose primitive affirmative form is <i>taba eo e leng ena...</i> 'the issue, which is this one'. |

| Qualifier | Example | Gloss | Features of qualifiers |
|------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Descriptive possessive (noun stem) | ... <i>setumo sa bohla le bottle</i> [<i>ba morali oa hae</i>] <i>se ne se anetse</i> ... (Maina, 2002: 3) | 'The fame of his daughter's intelligence and beauty was well known'. | In <i>setumo sa bohla le bottle ba morali oa hae se ne se anetse, sa bohla le bottle</i> 'of intelligence and beauty' is a conjoined direct relative qualifier whose stems are made up of nouns. Because of the recursion property, the conjoint possessive <i>sa bohla le bottle</i> is followed by another two possessives <i>ba morali</i> 'of daughter' and <i>oa hae</i> 'of his' whose stems are a descriptive possessive noun stem <i>moral</i> 'daughter' and a primitive possessive stem <i>hae</i> , correspondingly. The descriptive possessive noun stems <i>bohla le bottle</i> 'intelligence and beauty' indicate the source of <i>setumo</i> 'fame', while <i>ba morali</i> 'daughter's' shows the source of <i>bohla le bottle</i> 'intelligence and beauty'. <i>Oa hae</i> 'of his' denotes a possession by family (Guma, 1971). The construction is in an affirmative form. It has been observed that when there is a descriptive possessive qualifier whose stem is a noun, it comes the indirect relative clause when negated. For instance, the direct relative qualifier becomes, <i>setumo seo e seng sa bohla le bottle</i> ... 'the fame that is not of intelligence and beauty...'. Primatively, this is a negative form for <i>setumo seo e leng sa bohla le bottle</i> ... 'the fame, which is of intelligence and beauty'. |

Conclusion

This article has explored the features of the direct relative constructions whose stems are verbs in Sesotho to determine the type of the sentence that they could have. As a result, the article has revealed that there is simplicity in the so-called direct relative qualifiers in Sesotho as their inclusion in a sentence renders complex sentences. These complex sentences have one main clause and one or more subordinate clauses, and one of the subordinate clauses is the direct relative clause. Even if the direct relative whose stem is a verb modifies or qualifies the substantives just like other qualificatives, the article argues that Sesotho does not rely only on the complementisers, relativisers and wh-words to mark a sentence a subordinate clause, as suggested by Machobane (2010), but the relativiser in Sesotho can mark the direct relative subordinate clause. The research article concludes that this direct relative subordinate clause is a reduced clause. Because of movement of a subject, which triggers simplicity (tendency of simple construction to generate complex forms) in the direct relative qualifiers in Sesotho, a subject has the potential to move from either the [spec-VP] to [spec-TP] to become the subject of the whole sentence, or from the lower [spec, TP] to the higher [spec, TP], hence the reduced clause. Again, a sentence that has a direct relative whose stem is a verb can have one or two subjects performing more than one action. This movement of the specifiers or objects is motivated by the fact that even the relative verb stem requires arguments just like the main verb. The article has also sought to establish if the direct relatives whose stems are verb belong to the qualifiers only or both the qualifiers and clauses as suggested by the literature. Having explored the features of such relatives, the article has depicted that they can recursively be complemented by the qualificative pronouns, prepositional phrases, adverbs, nouns and verb phrases; they can incorporate verbal extension, objective agreement and negation; and they can also take tense. All these features are seen in the predicates of Sesotho, not in any other parts of speech. Therefore, the article concludes that the direct relatives whose stems are the verbs do not qualify to be the qualifiers, but they are clauses that describe the

substantives in a sentence. As for the relative qualifiers, the article argues that the relative qualifiers have only a direct type, which includes the following stems: primitives, adverbs, nouns and complex noun relative stems, excluding the relative verb stem. The article suggests that future studies could focus on the semantic implications on the negated qualifiers (excluding the relative qualifiers whose stems are verbs), and the corresponding primitives of the indirect relative qualifiers.

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