

PARTITIVE CASE & ABSTRACT LICENSING: INSIGHTS FROM KINANDE



Monica Alexandrina Irimia, University of Modena and Reggio Emilia

Patricia Schneider-Zioga, University of California Fullerton

irimiamo@unimore.it; pzioga@fullerton.edu



1a. The sociative causative and Case

- A newly discovered causative construction in Kinande: *sociative causative - causing by helping* (Schneider-Zioga & Mutaka to appear)

- dedicated sociative morphology, typologically rare
- obligatory verbal extension (suffix) **-ik/ek-**
- also characterized by distinctive morphology on the internal argument of the caused event
- internal argument marked with **locative (oko) morphology** but without locative interpretation
- locative morphology interpreted partitively
- the partitive-marked argument also shows unexpected syntactic properties (Section 3)

KINANDE SOCIATIVE CAUSATIVE

- (1) Kávirá a-k'-ér-ek-a-y-a Maryá y' *(oko) ngímba.
Kavira 3SG-IMPV-wash-SOC- Mary LK' 17LOC 10cloth
TAM-TR-FV =PART
'Kavira helps Mary wash her clothes.'

Our claims:

- The *-oko* marked internal argument is a type of structural inherent Case.
- This type of inherent Case is subject to licensing inside *vP*.
- Case does play a role in Bantu languages.

1b. Context: (NO?) Case in Bantu

- Bantu languages are at the center of a debate about Case and its validity as a universal.
- Case theory accounts for distribution of nominals.
- Problem - the distribution of nominals is far more liberal in most Bantu languages (Kinande) than one finds in a language like English.

- (2) [omo mulongo] mwásatiré múlúme.
18LOC 3village 18danced 1man
'A man danced in the village.'

2. The sociative causative: Interpretation

- Interpretation of the sociative causative in (1):

- (3) $\lambda P.\lambda x.\lambda y. \exists e, e'[P(e) \wedge P(e') \wedge e' < e \wedge \text{agent}(e') = y \wedge \text{beneficiary}(e) = x]$
a. Helping = helper carries out a sub-event of the caused event.
b. Caused event is partitively shared between both participants.

- oko** marks partitivity morphologically on the DP, but it is displacement of the partitivity of the entire event.

- (4) Kám bale í t-ik-á-y-a Magulu y' okó nzóka.
Kambale kill-SOC-TAM-TR-FV Magulu LK' 17LOC=PART 9snake
'Kambale helped Magulu kill the snake.'

- Here, the interpretation is NOT that Kambale and Magulu each killed part of the snake. Instead, the sentence means they each did part of the killing.
- Displacement similar to Finnish aspectually-conditioned partitive Case (Kiparsky 1998)

3. The partitive argument: Syntactic properties

- For partitives, *vP* internal re-ordering is restricted (not so for other multiple argument constructions in Kinande, including other causatives):

- (5) a. *Kávirá a-k'-ér-ek-a-y-a [oko ngímba ko Marya.]
Kavira 3SG-TAM-wash-SOC-TAM-TR-FV 17LOC=PART 10cloth 17LK Marya
Intended: 'Kavira helps Mary wash her clothes.'

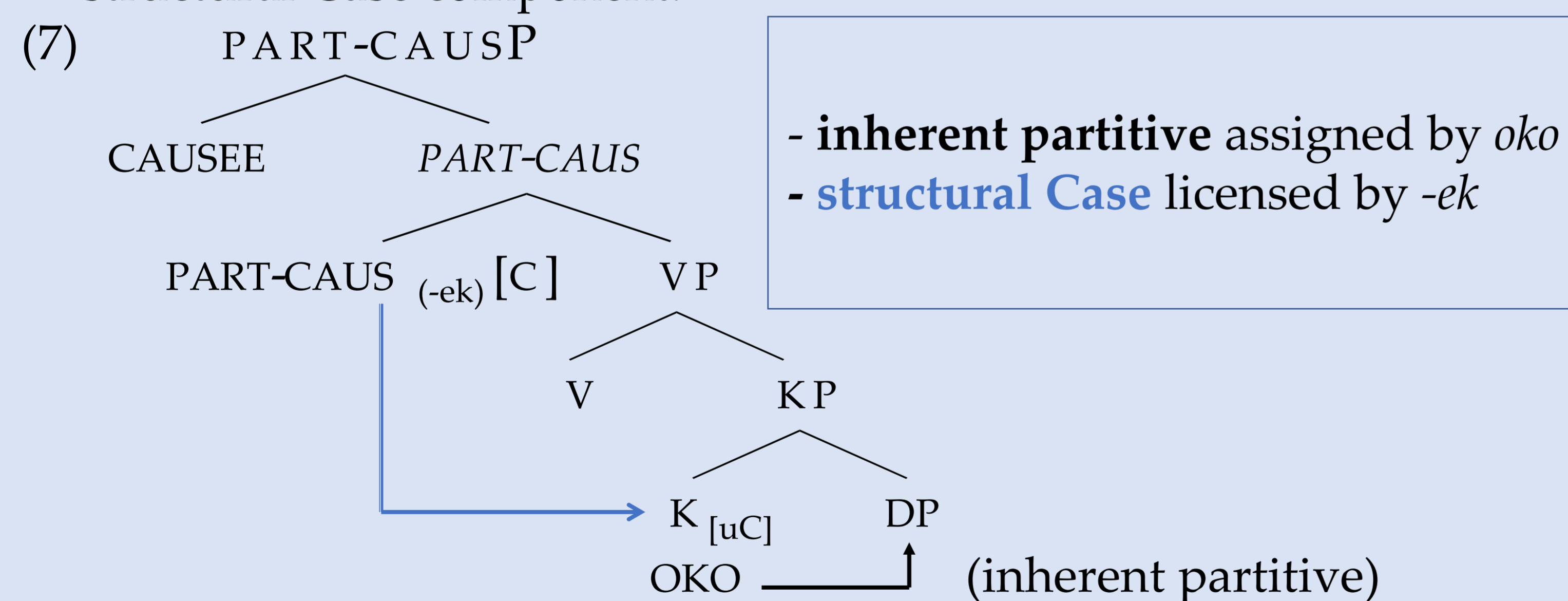
- b. Kávirá a-k'-ér-ek-a-y-a [Maryá y' oko ngímba.]
Kavira 3SG-TAM-wash-SOC-TAM-TR-FV Marya LK 17LOC=PART 10cloth
'Kavira helps Mary wash her clothes.'

- Ability to passivize is restricted (not so for other multiple argument constructions in Kinande, including other causatives):

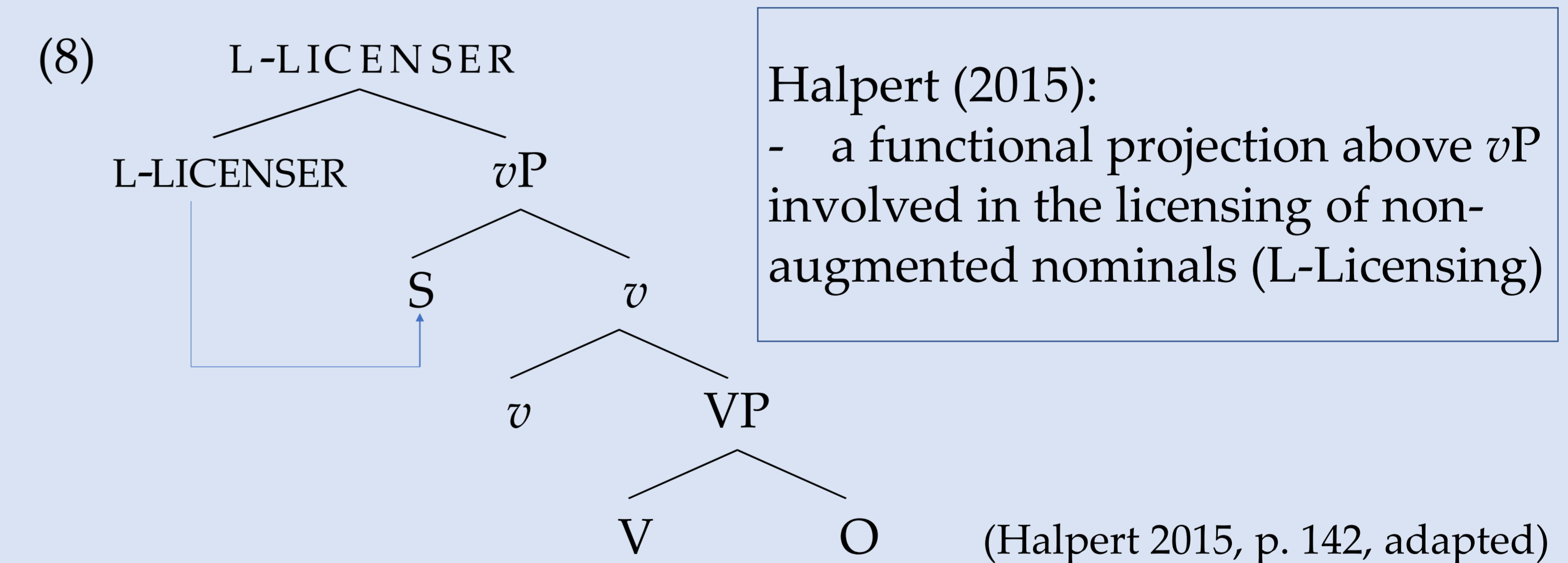
- (6) *oko mpago kw-a-hek-ek-i-bá-w-a Magulu (na Kám bale)
17LOC=PART 10plank 17-TAM-carry-SOC-TR-TAM-PASS-FV Magulu (with Kambale)
Literally: 'Planks were helped to be carried Magulu (by Kambale).'

4. The partitive needs licensing inside *vP*

- A minimalist reinterpretation of de Hoop's (1996) insight that PARTITIVE is best understood as weak structural case
- Weak structural Case involves both an inherent (idiosyncratic) & structural Case component.

5. Halpert (2015) – *vP* licensing

- Support for Halpert's proposal that there is *vP* internal licensing of nominals in Zulu, in particular, and in Bantu languages, in general
- Evidence from NPIs and augmented nominals inside *vP*



6. Partitive case in sociative causatives is structural

Evidence that partitive case (*oko-*) is a structural Case:

- (9) esyombago sy-a-hek-ek-i-báw-á-ko (*Magulu)
10planks 10--TAM-carry-SOC-TR-PASS-FV-LOC (*Magulu)
'The planks were helped to be carried.'

Evidence that the partitive nominal is not an adjunct:

- The NPI licensing algorithm in Kinande cares about lowest argument within the verb phrase, not lowest XP per se.
 - the partitive-marked nominal patterns with arguments
 - non-partitive locatives can in principle pattern with either arguments or adjuncts

7. Conclusions

- The sociative partitive data can be best explained by assuming that the structural inherent Case is subject to licensing inside *vP*.
- Our conclusion: **Case does play a role in Bantu languages.**
- Contra** Harford Perez 1985, a.o. who claim: Bantu nominals do not need licensing; or Diercks 2012, van der Wal 2015, a.o. :
Needing Case is a parametric choice (with most Bantu languages being set to *no Case*).
- Pro** Halpert 2015 and Carsten & Mletshe 2016, who claim: nominal licensing plays a role in Bantu languages.

Selected references and acknowledgements

Carstens, V., & L. Mletshe. 2015. Implications of Xhosa expletive constructions. *Linguistic Inquiry* 46:187-242. De Hoop, H. 1996. *Case configuration and noun phrase interpretation*. Routledge. Diercks, M. 2012. Parameterizing Case: Evidence from Bantu. *Syntax* 15(3): 253-286. Halpert, C. 2015. *Argument licensing and agreement*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Harford Perez, C., 1985. *Aspects of Complementation in Three Bantu Languages*. Madison, WI. Kiparsky, P. 1998. Partitive case and aspect. In *The projection of arguments*, 265-308. Stanford, CA. Schneider-Zioga, P. & P. N., Mutaka. (to appear). The syntax and semantics of helping: Sociative causation in Kinande. *JAL*. van der Wal, J. 2015. Evidence for abstract Case in Bantu. *Lingua*, 165, 109-132.

Parts of this work have been supported by a grant from Unimore, as well as the ERC grant 295733 (PI Giuseppe Longobardi) to M.A. Irimia. We are grateful to the audience at PlaCiG (Rethymno, October 20 2018), as well as to Claire Halpert, Jenneke van der Wal, Paul Kiparsky and Mark Baker for their feedback.