

Màda Double Object Constructions: A Problem for the Case Theory

¹Samuel, Nuhu Baba & ²Izang, Abigail Ambi

¹Department of Languages and Linguistics, ²Department of English
Nasarawa State University, Keffi

Abstract

This paper examines how each of the two argument NPs, in Màda double object constructions (DOC), receive abstract Case in order to prevent a violation of the Case filter. Màda, a Platoid language of the Benue-Congo subfamily, is spoken predominately in Nasarawa State and few adjoining states in the Middle Belt, Nigeria (Kaduna and Plateau States). It has long been observed in the literature that abstract Case could be assigned either structural or inherent derivable at the D-structure or S-structure. In principle, a verb must not only govern its complement but assign abstract Case to it constrained by government and adjacency conditions. However, there are lexically closed verbs that can co-occur with double object NPs without any overt Case marker in Màda. This type of construction violates Case filter. The question we intend to answer here is how abstract Case is assigned to the Caseless NP in a typical Màda double object construction. Our focus in this paper is to show how Case is assigned in Màda and how to address the problem of Case assignment in Màda DOCs within the Principles and Parameters model. In an attempt to solve the problem, we adopt Chomsky's (1981) Alternative approach and Sanusi's (2001) Unified approach. Data for this study is elicited through introspection corroborated with insights from competent speakers of Màda. Finding from this study reveals that Màda lacks overt dative marker and dative shift is not allowed in its syntax. The study concludes that double object verbs are shown to reanalyze with their direct objects to form complex predicates, which inherit the Case assigning properties of their main verbs (via GTC) and therefore have the ability to govern and assign abstract Case to the ungoverned NP thereby escaping a major violation of Case filter.

Keywords: Case, Case filter, ditransitive, Double object constructions, Reanalysis, Màda

Introduction

The concept Case generated a lot of interest in linguistics (cf. Chomsky, 1986, Blake, 1994, Horrocks, 1987, Culicover, 1997, Ura, 2001, Cook & Newson, 2007). Case is a syntactic property that is universally attested among natural languages. Blake (2001) refers Case to inflectional marking, and typically, Case marks the relationship of a noun to a verb at the clause level or of a noun to a preposition, or another noun at the phrase level. It is purely a syntactic relations, such as subject, direct object and indirect object, each encompasses more than one semantic role. In the literature, distinction is made between two types of Case: abstract Case and inherent Case. According to Spencer (1995), abstract Case is a property of the S-structure while inherent Case is a property of the D-structure. Abstract Case is assigned under government (Chomsky, 1981; Riemsdijk & Williams, 1989). Chomsky (1981) remarks that

Case assigners are heads of syntactic categories. In other words, abstract Case is assigned to NPs by Case assigners like verbs, prepositions, and tensed INFL. While verbs and prepositions assign Accusative and or Oblique Case to recipient and theme arguments, the tensed INFL assigns Nominative Case to agent-arguments.

A double object construction (Henceforth, DOC) is one of the means in natural language to encode a predicate with three arguments. Edmond & Whitney (2005) report that DOCs have been studied within linguistic theories with a significant focus in accounting for which of the two objects is the true object. Despite the wealth of research in this area, few lexical items have been studied; especially the *give*-verb or construction appears to be the most widespread. It is often described as the prototypical DOC verb (Lam, 2008). In fact, to investigate the syntax of DOC, the most frequently used term is ditransitivity or the *give*-



construction (Kittilä, 2006; Malchukov et al, 2007; Lam, 2008; Thomas, 2012). Following Lam (2008), definitions of ditransitivity are illustrated as comprising a verb like ‘give’. However, she reports that the give-construction is not prototypical as assumed in the literature though the trivalent verb ‘give’ is the most represented ditransitive verb cross-linguistically and perhaps the only ditransitive verb that behaves exceptionally (cf. Lam, 2008; Thomas, 2012).

Lam (2008) describes ditransitivity in two ways: first as a semantic label which considers the number and type of argument a verb takes at the level of argument structure. In other words, semantic ditransitivity denotes a three-place predicate or trivalent (Kittilä, 2006), and subcategorizes for arguments such as agent, recipient-like and theme. Malchukov et al (2007) report that verbs such as *give*, *lend*, *sell*, *return*, *show*, *tell* and *hand* are trivalent in nature hence subcategorize for agent argument, recipient-like argument and a theme argument. Lam (2008) illustrates semantic ditransitivity in the following examples:

- (1) [John] gave [Mary] [the book]
 Ag Rpt Th
- (2) [John] sold [Mary] [the book]
 Ag Rpt Th
- (3) [John] showed [Mary] [the book]
 Ag Rpt Th

From the foregoing, there is one-to-one mapping between semantic roles and grammatical relations. Notice that the verbs subcategorize for two arguments rightward thus, playing a role in the realization of argument option. This describes what Rappaport Hovav & Levin (2008) termed verb-sensitivity or verb-sensitive approach. Secondly, in favour of argument mapping, Kittilä (2006) and Lam (2008) opine that a predicate is syntactically ditransitive if and only if it co-occurs with two objects. This is to say that the constructions above cannot be described as DOCs without some form of syntactic diagnostics though the verbs –*give*, *buy* and *show* are trivalent but not all trivalent verbs are ditransitive. In English, for instance, the dative

alternation shares the same argument structure of the agent, recipient-like and theme argument with either pattern [V NP PP] or [V NP NP]. Consider the examples below;

- (4) [John] gave [the book] [to Mary]
 V NP PP
- (5) [John] gave [Mary] [the book]
 V NP NP

We can see (from 4-5 above) that both structures are trivalent yet only one satisfies our definition of syntactic ditransitivity. In (4), the recipient argument is realized by an oblique PP and not by the NP as shown in (5). The pattern –agent-recipient-theme is considered a double object construction against the pattern in (4) that is, dative construction or alternation. Our focus, however, is to examine the nature and pattern of double construction in Màda [V NP NP] with a view to investigating the problem pose by this type of construction to the Case theory.

1. Màda Clause Structure: An Overview

Màda exhibits SVO as its canonical word order. It displays most of the usual Benue-Congo word order properties. It is entirely a head-initial language with features such as having a preposition, postnominal possessor, postverbal adjuncts and so on (Samuel, 2016). The Màda clause structure generally builds on words, phrases such as NP, VP, AP, PP and simple sentences. Structurally, it exhibits the subject-predicate relationship. Consider the following examples in (6) below:

- 6 i. gu re matò
 3SG buy-PAST car
 S V O
 ‘S/he bought (a) car.’
- ii. Rinchē rē là yə
 3SG eat-PAST food the
 S V O
 ‘Rinchē ate the food.’

As we can see in (6), Màda exhibits the SVO word order which is relatively fixed. In terms of linear ordering, other elements can be fused into the SVO structure as far as they do not alter the fixed order. Consider the following examples in (7) below:



- 7 i. Anaga rɛ Mbecūn gbārki
3SG buy-PAST Mbecūn flower
S V O O
'Anaga bought Mbecūn a flower.'
- ii. Bala nɔ Audu kejī
Bala give-PAST Audu money
S V O O
'Bala gave Audu money.'
- iii. ŋgə nɔ bə blà
1stSG give-PAST them instruction
S V O O
'I gave them instruction.'

It is clear that in (7), the two NPs are contiguous; one adjacent to the verb and the other as direct object. This type of construction is permissible in the syntax of Māda; thus double object construction is seen as a type of sentence in Māda.

2.1 Syntactic Classification of Māda Verbs

Apart from the general semantic classification of verbs, another approach to classifying Māda verbs is through the examination of the type of arguments that verbs subcategorize for. In other words, the classification of verbs concerns the number of arguments a verb can take. Syntactically, Māda verbs are sub-classified into five classes (Blench & Barau, 2006; Samuel, 2012; 2016) viz: transitive verbs, intransitive verbs, ditransitive verbs, intensive or copular verbs and verbs that subcategorize for prepositional phrases as complements.

2.1.1 Transitive Verb

A transitive verb is one that requires a single NP as a sister in the verb phrase. A canonical transitive verb denotes a functional relationship between a verb and a single NP. Examples are:

- 8 i. rɛ matò
buy-PST car
'bought a car'
- ii. blā mgbamvu car yə
read tablet write the
'read the slate'

- iii. gu rɛ krì
3SG eat yam
'S/he ate some yams.'

From the foregoing, (8) shows a functional relationship between a verb and its corresponding NP. In (8i-iii), the verbs subcategorize for NPs whose syntactic functions are to complement the main verb in a typical verb phrase or simple sentence as shown above.

2.1.2 Intransitive Verb

This class of verb does not require any complement (NP) as a sister in the VP. In Māda, it can form a complete sense.

- 9 i. ywē
'go'
- ii. gu nyə.
3SG come-PAST
'S/he came.'
- iii. gyer ŋgə dò
mother my sing
'My mother sings'.

2.1.3 Ditransitive Verb

A ditransitive verb is a double object verb. It requires three-place argument NPs functioning as subject, indirect object and direct object. Examples are:

- 10 i. gurɛ Nuhu gbārki
3SG buy-PAST Nuhu flower
S V IO DO
'S/he bought Nuhu a flower.'
- ii. vɛn ŋgə nɔ Mbecūn kəji
son my give-PAST Mbecūn money
S V IO DO
'My son gave Mbecūn some money.'
- iii. tɔ mɛ gu kə
3pl build-PAST him house
S V IO DO
'We built him a house.'
- iv. gu nɔ bə bəbu
3SG give-PAST them bible
S V IO DO
'S/he gave them a Bible.'
- v. ŋgə cār gu wasikā
1st SG write-PAST him letter
S V IO DO
'I wrote him a letter.'



In (10), we can see that the two argument NPs follow the verb without any intervening overt marker because the word order is relatively fixed. In other words, we cannot alter the argument position of the two NPs without using an intervening overt marker. The following examples are ungrammatical:

- 11 i. *gu rɛ gbārki Nuhu
3SG buy-PAST flower Nuhu
S V DO IO
'S/he bought a flower for Nuhu.'
- ii. *vɛn ŋgə nə kəji Mbecūn
3SG my give-PAST money Mbecūn
S V DO IO
'My son gave money to Mbecūn.'
- iii. *tə mɛ kə gu
3PL build-PAST house him
S V DO IO
'We built a house for him.'

2.1.4 Intensive Verb

Intensive verbs are commonly known as linking, or copular verbs (Robert, 2016). This type of verbs requires a single complement which can be predicate nominal, predicate adjective, or prepositional phrases (Robert, 2016; Hopper, 1999). In Māda, the most common class of intensive verb is the auxiliary verb-*là/sɛ/sə* (Blench & Barau, 2006; Samuel, 2012; 2016).

- 12 i. tɛ ŋgə sɛ kūn (AP)
Father my be sick
'My father is sick.'
- ii. ŋgə là ən kə (PP)
1st SG. be at house
'I am at home.'
- iii. gu sɛ gyə ŋgə (NP)
3SG be mother my
'She is my mother.'

From the sentences presented in (12), the auxiliary verb *là* is used differently from *sɛ*. The reason is that while *là* is used with only first person, *sɛ* is used distinctively with second and third person.

2.1.5 Verbs that Sub-categorize for Prepositional Phrases as Complements

There are verbs that are complemented by prepositional phrases. Such verbs require only

a single PP as an optional modifier, adjunct or complement. In Māda, the locative preposition **ən** 'at', the ablative preposition **ru** 'from' are commonly used with intransitive verbs (Samuel, 2012; 2016). Consider the following examples in (13) below:

- 13 i. tə sɛ ən kə
3PL be at house
'We are at home.'
- ii. Laraba nyə ru Keffi
3SG come-PAST from Keffi
'Laraba came from Keffi.'
- iii. Bala mər ən yà ŋgə.
3SG look-PAST at friend my
'Bala looked at my friend.'

In (13), the verb requires a prepositional phrase as complement, or adjunct. For instance, in (8iii), the verb **mər** 'to look' can only be complemented by a prepositional phrase (PP). Consider, for instance, the deviant sentences in (14) below:

- 14 i. *Nuhu mər (mər is not intransitive)
Nuhu look-PAST
'Nuhu looked.'
- ii. *Nuhu mər yàŋ gə (mər is not transitive)
Nuhu look-PAST friend my
'Nuhu looked my female friend.'
- iii. Nuhu mər ən yà ŋgə (mər requires a PP complement)
3SG look-PAST at female friend my
'Nuhu looked at my female friend.'

2. Defining Abstract Case

Smith (1996) defines Case as syntactic prior its basic distribution and interaction with other Cases. According to Blake (2001), Case refers to purely syntactic relations, such as subject, direct object and indirect object, each encompasses more than one semantic role. Distinction is made between abstract Case and inherent Case (Haegeman 1991; Cook & Newson 2007; Prasad 2008). Abstract Case is a type of Case that is sensitive to structure, and is assigned under government. In other words, the governor determines the choice of abstract (structural) Case. If Case is assigned under government, and if every lexical NP must have Case, then every lexical NP must appear in a position governed by the Case assigner (Riemsdijk & Williams, 1986).



It follows that both the assignee and assigner must be contiguous. The most common abstract Case includes: Nominative Case, Accusative Case, Dative Case and Oblique Case. Consider the examples below:

- 15
- i. Baba re mgbamvū car
3SG. buy-PAST leaf write
NOM ACC
'Baba bought a book.'
 - ii. bə mɛ kə
3PL. build-PAST house
NOM ACC
'They built a house.'
 - iii. tə n̄ɔn gwǎ yə bə dǎ
1st SG. kill. PAST snake the with machete
NOM ACC OBL
'We killed the snake with a machete.'

Abstract Case is assigned in (15). Syntactically, abstract Cases (NOM-ACC-OBL) are heads of syntactic categories as shown above. Inherent Case is associated with particular arguments, and it is sensitive to semantic role (Blake, 2001). This type of Case is assigned by nouns and adjectives to their NP complements. According to Chomsky (1986b), if A is an inherent Case assigner, then A assigns Case to an NP, if and only if A theta-marks the NP. In lieu of this, Prasad (2008) postulates the following conditions:

- a. Nouns and adjectives should assign theta roles to their complements.
 - b. They should govern their complements.
- In the literature, the most common inherent Case is genitive Case, which is assigned to an NP followed by something within it. In fact, genitive Case is morphologically realized in a form denoting possession.

This type of Case is only sensitive to semantic role or theta marking of complements (Blake, 2001; Prasad, 2008).

3.1 Case Marking in Māda

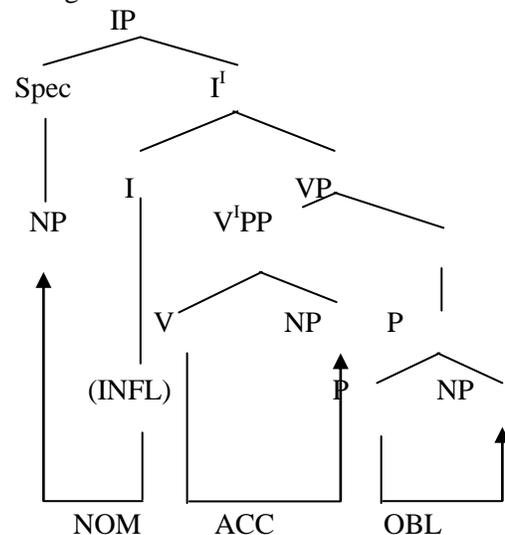
Case is a universal feature of all phonetically realized NPs in a given language whose central role is to regulate the distribution of NPs within a sentence (Haegeman, 1991; Yusuf, 1997; Agbedo, 2000; Cook & Newson, 2007; Prasad, 2008; Lamidi, 2008). Case marking is uniform in

all language. In view of Case uniformity, two major systems occur cross-linguistically: Nominative/Accusative system and Ergative/Absolutive system (Tallerman, 2005). Māda, like English, is a Nominative/Accusative language because it has little or no overt marking, and organizes aspects of its syntax uniformly. Hence, Māda exhibits the SVO word order. Sells (1985), states five basic instances of Case marking. They are as follows:

- a. If INFL contains TNS, nominative Case is assigned to an NP, S¹ position.
- b. A verb assigns Accusative Case to NP.
- c. A preposition assigns oblique Case to NP.
- d. Case is assigned under government with the exception of genitive Case.
- e. Genitive Case is assigned in the structure [NP- X].

In Māda, Case assigner is on the left while the assignee is on the right (VO). In other words, Māda has the pattern AS/O: A (agent) and S (subject) which are marked the same for Nominative Case, O (object) is marked differently, either as direct object (ACC) or indirect Case (OBL). It is a known fact that in Nominative/Accusative languages, subjects of both transitive and intransitive or ditransitive verbs are marked the same (NOM) and objects of transitive verbs are marked with Accusative Case. The diagram below explains this uniformity.

Fig 1



Given the structural representation in Fig.1, nominative Case depends on the tensed INFL purportedly marked under I¹, accusative Case is assigned by the verb to its argument NP which depends on the V within the VP, and P assigns oblique Case to its object NP. The core argument(s) of the VP must be assigned some Case. That is, the verb assigns accusative Case to its argument. Accusative Case is assigned by the main verb of the VP within which the status of the object NP depends on. Consider (16) below:

- 16 i. mbə rē ləgū
woman eat-PAST cassava
'The woman ate cassava.'
- ii. gu sɔ tə
3SG. love we
'He/she loves us.'
- iii. tē ɲgə cār mgbamvu cār
father my write-PAST leaf write
'My father wrote a book.'

In (16i-iv), the object NP receives accusative Case by virtue of its syntactic position in the sentence. The verb *rē* in (16i), for instance, assigns accusative Case to its object NP *ləgū*, thereby satisfying adjacency condition which requires Case assigners to be adjacent to the NP that receives Case. The Māda pronominal system recognizes the fact that Case is uniformly assigned to NPs (pronouns) in argument position. Consider the table below:

		Nominative	Accusative	Genitive
Singular	1st	ɲgə 'I'	ɲgə 'me'	məɲgə 'mine'
	2 nd	wə 'you'	wə 'you'	məwə 'yours'
	3 rd	gu 's/he'	gu 'him/her'	məgu 'his/hers'
Plural	1st	tə 'we'	tə 'us'	mətə 'ours'
	2 nd	gyə 'you'	gyə 'you'	məgyə 'yours'
	3 rd	bə 'they'	bə 'them'	məbə 'theirs'

Table showing the Māda pronominal system

The table shows the pronominal system of Māda in its singular and plural forms. Consider the following examples in (17).

- 17 i. ɲgə ywē kə
1SG go-PST house
'I went home.'
- ii. Nēkrə ɲyə kə ɲrən vən məkə.
3SG come-PST house see child his
'Nēkrə came home to see his son.'
- iii. wə gi ɲjī yə
2nd PL steal-PAST knife the
'You stole the knife.'
- iv. bə tsə gu
3PL beat him
'They punished him.'
- v. mgbamvū cār sē məɲgə
leaf write is mine
'The book is mine.'

We can see in (17) that Māda pronouns are marked for Case based on their distribution within the sentences above. For instance, the pronoun 'wə' is assigned nominative Case by virtue of its structural position within the sentence. In (17iv), the object pronoun *gu* receives accusative Case while the genitive pronoun *məɲgə* in (17v) receives an inherent Case (genitive Case).

3. Syntactic Consideration of Māda Double Object Constructions

Judging from our examples in (10), it is clear that double object construction is a type of sentence in Māda. Consider the following examples:

- 18 i. ɲgə rɛ gu matə
i buy-PST he car
Subj V IO DO
'I bought him a car.'
- ii. vən yə tē Baba pré
boy the fetch-PST Baba porridge
Subj V IO DO
'The boy served Baba some porridge.'
- iii. ɲgə mɛ gyər ɲgə kə
i build-PST mother my house
Subj V IO DO



- ‘I built my mother a house.’
- iv. ləlɔn rɛ Mbɛkɪ ləmū
 man buy-PST Mbɛkɪ orange
 Subj V IO DO
 ‘The man bought Mbɛkɪ some oranges.’
- v. Nɛkrɛ nə ɲgə kəjɪ
 Nɛkrɛ give-PAST me money
 Subj V IO DO
 ‘Nɛkrɛ gave me some money.’
- vi. ɲgə ryūn gu sɛka
 i cook-PAST him rice
 Subj V IO DO
 ‘I served him rice.’

As could be observed in (18), the verbs subcategorize for double object NPs. The two complements of the ditransitive verb follow the canonical order below:

VP → [VNP₁NP₂]

Within this order, the adjacent NP receives abstract Case because it immediately precedes the main verb in the sentence while the second object NP on the other hand, is neither governed nor receives any abstract Case by the verb thereby violating the Case filter. In the opinion of Riemsdijk & Williams (1986), if Case is assigned under government, and if every lexical NP must have Case, then every lexical NP must appear in a structural position governed by the Case assigner. However, the second object NP is not properly governed nor appears in a structural position to receive abstract Case

4. The Proposal

Given the theoretical issue raised in this paper, we shall adopt Chomsky’s (1981) Alternative approach and a unified approach, as proposed by Sanusi (2002; 2012) which merges Larson’s (1988) V’ Reanalysis and Baker’s (1985) Abstract Noun Incorporation (ANI) and Government Transparency Corollary (GTC).

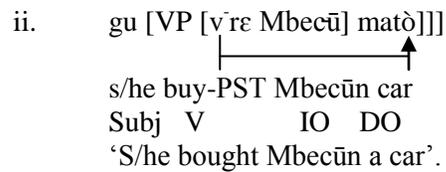
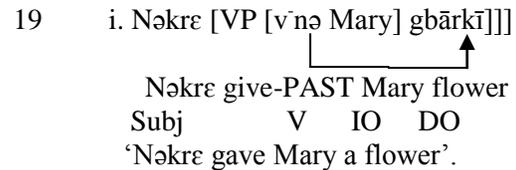
5.1 Chomsky’s (1981) Alternative Approach

Chomsky (1981) suggests that an alternative analysis of DOC would be that the VP contains an internal VP (v̄) which assigns inherent Case to an ungoverned and Caseless NP.

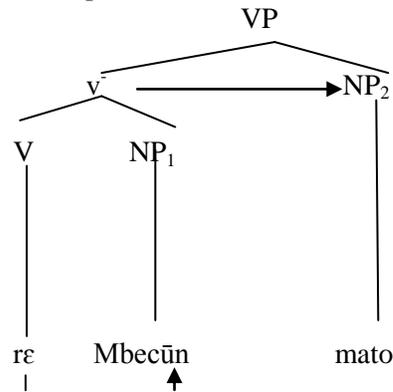
Based on this assumption, all DOCs in (5 & 13) can be explained as containing an internal verb which govern and assign inherent Case to the ungoverned object NP. In this order, the structure of DOC would look like...

NP [VP [v̄ NP₁] NP₂]

Therefore, the internal verb is inherently realized at the D-structure. Let us consider the illustration below:



As could be observed in (19i & ii), the string *Mary* receives abstract object Case from the main verb *nə*, while *gbārki* receives another Case from the *v̄* which functions as a governor. According to Chomsky (1981), internal verbs have the ability to assign secondary Case to their second NPs. In the same vein, Ouhalla (1994) presents an appraisal in support of Chomsky (1981) that there have been attempts in the literature to attribute verbs such as ‘give’ in standard English the ability to assign two Cases. We assume that the internal verb which is realized at the D-structure assigns secondary Case to NP₂. Thus, the structure of Māda DOCs based on our assumption will look like



It is argued here that there is an internal verb at the D-structure which assigns Case to the second object NP. The main verb governs and assigns only one Case to NP₁-*Mbecūn* while NP₂ is assigned inherent Case by the internal verb (*v*). In support of his proposal, Chomsky claims that inherent Case is closely related to certain theta roles, and, therefore is assigned according to the idiosyncratic properties of the verb. As could be observed in our diagram above, the second NP-*matò* receives theta role, namely *theme*, from the verb *rɛ*.

5.2 Sanusi’s(2002; 2012)Unified Approach

As in other account of Case assignment in DOC, the structure of DOC is described as containing an internal layer that governs and assigns inherent Case to the second ungoverned NP, thus it is apparent to show that we can assign two object Cases in DOC structurally. This can be achieved through what Larson (1988) termed V^l-reanalysis. According to Larson (1988), a complex predicate is formed only if v-raising is taken into consideration. In other words, he describes the structure of DOC as [*v* *t* *e*] where *t* is the trace of v-raising, and *e* is the trace of NP movement.

As a further consequence, we assume here that in Mada DOC, the direct object is incorporated into the main verb through ‘restructuring’, and that the NP constituent derived from syntactic reanalysis produces a complex predicate which has the ability to govern and assign Case to the ungoverned and Caseless NP via Government Transparency Corollary(GTC). In other words, the lexical category which has an item incorporated into it governs everything which the incorporated item governed in its original structural position. According to Sanusi (2012), incorporation is derived from the theory of government and the complements of the moved word are governed by the complex word that is formed by incorporation. However, we appeal to the claims made by syntacticians that NP₂ is incorporated into the *v* to avoid violation of Case filter given the notion of Abstract Noun Incorporation (ANI). Noun incorporation of this kind is triggered by

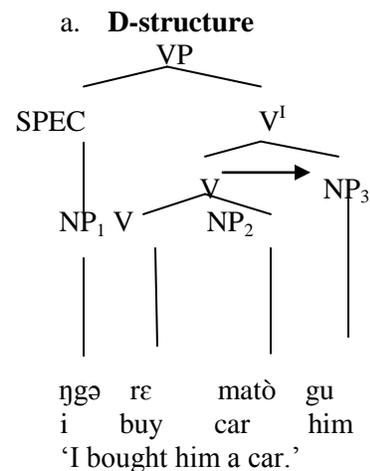
head movement from the original structure. Massam (2009) summarizes noun incorporation as thus;

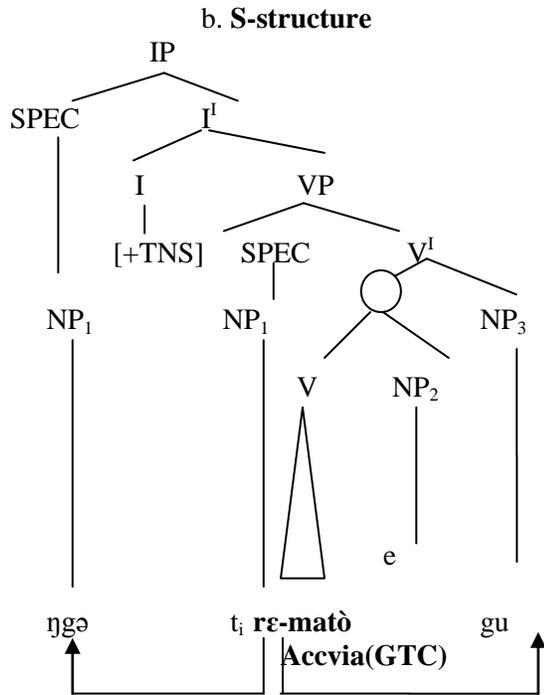
“... a grammatical construction where a nominal that would be canonical be expected as an independent argument or adjunct is instead in some way incorporated into the verbal element of a sentence, forming part of the predicate” Massam (2009)

From the foregoing, a nominal element, preferably direct object or a bare noun can be incorporated into the verbal element to derive a complex predicate, that is, a case where a nominal element is merged with a light verb to derive the pattern [IP [_{VP} V NP]_iInflt_i]]. Consequently, the derived complex predicate must satisfy two structural conditions:

- i. Government Condition: Abstract Case is assigned to an NP that is governed by the verb. In other words, the verb and its complement are sisters.
- ii. Adjacency Condition: Abstract Case is assigned to the NP that immediately follows the verb.

However, using Koopman and Sportiche (1991) **VP-Internal Subject Hypothesis**, we can depict the D-structure (since inherent Case is assigned at the D-structure) and S-structure of Mada DOC below:





To derive the surface structure above, the light verb (the head of the VP₁) appear in a structural position from which it can govern the NP in Spec VP₂. Notice that the V node is restructured to form a complex predicate-**rɛ-matò** (buy a car) through incorporation. The main verb **rɛ**(to buy) and the abstractly incorporated direct object (**matò**) compositionally assigned accusative Case to NP₃ via GTC thereby escaping a major violation of the Case filter. Through reanalysis of nominal incorporation, NP₂ is absorbed because the direct object is combined with the main verb **rɛ** to form a complex structure, that is, [v V-NP]. Furthermore, we assume that NP₃ (second object NP) is the object of the derived complex verb **rɛ-matò**. However, this reconstruction satisfies the structural conditions of government and adjacency as well as Case filter. The expressive power of GTC cannot be overemphasized. It has been proven in the works of Baker (1985), Aoun and Li (1993), Sanusi (2002, 2012) among others to account for the problem of Case marking in double object constructions. Therefore, this study is a contribution to theoretical issues in Mada grammar and, in particular, the syntax of double object constructions.

5. Conclusion, Limitations and Implications

This paper focuses on the double object construction in Mada. It attempts to find out how abstract Case is marked in Mada. Syntactic issues in Mada received little or no attention. Previous works in Mada provided only comparative and descriptive analysis; theoretical accounts are very scarce. The present study serves as a foundation to theoretical analysis in Mada. In studying Mada verbs generally, this present study discovers that there are verbs that require two successive object NPs. However, we argue that the problem of Case assignment is cross-linguistic, and Mada DOC violates the Case filter, even structural conditions (i.e. government and adjacency conditions). As could be observed from Mada DOCs in (10 & 18), empirical evidence has shown that ditransitive verbs and their object NPs lack adjacency and are not properly governed. However, they violate government and adjacency conditions as well as Case filter. Attempt has been made to solve the problem of Case assignment and we demonstrate this using Sanusi's (2002) unified approach which merges Larson's (1988) V' Reanalysis and Baker's (1985) ANI and GTC. Our choice of proposal is based on the fact that GTC ensures that the lexical properties of the verb which are absorbed from the derived complex structure are made available through incorporation.

However, some limitations could be noted in this study. For instance, we attempted an examination of the structure of DOCs in Mada without looking into some aspects of linguistics such as the semantics of DOCs in general. Thus, from the inferences drawn in this study, there still remain a lot to be done in the syntax of Mada in general. We cannot claim to have exhaustively dealt with the subject matter; rather we have only attempted a theoretical analysis. Therefore, the attention of linguists has been drawn to embark upon general linguistic study of Mada and other indigenous languages from both ends (descriptive and theoretical perspective).

Endnotes

1. The Government Transparency Corollary (GTC) is a sequence of head movement (cf. Baker, 1985).



2. Abstract Noun Incorporation (ANI) is a syntactic word formation process where a nominal element is incorporated into the verbal element of a sentence. Thus forming part of the predicate.
3. Màda is a Platoid language of the Benue-Congo subfamily. It is the language of

the people of Màda that is spoken in predominantly in Akwanga Local Government Area of Nasarawa state and few adjoining states such as Kaduna and Plateau (cf. Samuel, 2016).

References

- Agbedo, C.U. (2000). *General linguistics: An introductory reader*: Nsukka. ACE Resource Konsult.
- Blake, B. J. (1994). *Case*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- _____ (2001). *Case*. 2nd Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Baker, M (1985). *Incorporation: A theory of grammatical function changing*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Blench, R. & Barau, M. (2006). *Mada verbs*. Cambridge: Kay Williansom Educational Foundation.
- Cook, V.J. & Newson (2007). *Chomsky's universal grammar: An introduction*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd.
- Culicover, P.W. (1997). *Principles and parameters: An introduction to syntactic theory*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Chomsky, N. (1981). *Lectures on government and binding theory*. Dordrecht: Foris.
- _____ (1986a). *Knowledge of language. Its nature, origin and use*. New York: Praeger.
- _____ (1986b). *Barriers*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.
- Edmond, J. & Whitney, R. (2005). Double object constructions. In Everaert, M. & Van Riemsdijk, H. (eds.). *The Blackwell companion of syntax*. Blackwell Publishing.
- Horrocks, G. (1987). *Generative grammar*. Harlow: Longman Group Ltd.
- Haegeman, L. (1991). *Introduction to government and binding theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hopper, P.J. (1999). *A short course in grammar*. New York: Norton and Company Ltd.
- Kittilä, S. (2006). The anomaly of the verb 'give' explained by its high (formal and semantic) transitivity. *Linguistics*, 44 (3). Pp. 569-600.
- Larson, R. (1988). "On the double object construction". *Linguistic inquiry vol.19, No.3, Pp.335-391*.
- Lamidi, M.T. (2008). *Aspects of Chomskyan grammar*. Oyo: Emman Publication.
- Lam, O. S-C. (2008). Object functions and the syntax of double object constructions in lexical functional grammar. (Ph.D. Thesis). University of Oxford.
- Malchukov, A., Haspelmath, M. & Comrie, B. (2007). Ditransitive construction: A typological overview. Ms. Max Planck Institute of Evolutionary Anthropology.
- Massam, D. (2009). Noun incorporation: Essentials and extension. *Language and Linguistics Compass*. (3), Pp. 1076-1096.
- Prasad, T. (2008). *A course in general linguistics*. New Delhi: Prentice-Hall of India Private Ltd.
- Radford, A. (1985). *Transformational grammar: A first course*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Riemsdijk, H. V. & Williams, E. (1986). *Introduction to the theory of grammar*. MIT.
- Radford, A. (2003). *Syntax: A minimalist introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Robert, N.B. (2016). *Analysis of sentences: An introduction to English syntax*. 4th Edition. London: Routledge.
- Rappaport Hova, M. & Levin, B. (2008). The English dative alternation: The case for verb sensitivity. *Journal of Linguistics*. 44. Pp. 129-167.
- Sells, P. (1985). *Lectures on contemporary syntactic theories: An introduction to government & binding theory, generalized phrase structure grammar, and lexical functional grammar*.
- Sanusi, I. O. (2002). The syntax of double object constructions in Batonu. (Ph.D. Thesis). University of



- Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.
- Sanusi, I.O. (2012). “Batonu dative constructions: A problem for the case theory”. *Journal of Law and Social Sciences*. 2(1). Pp. 245 – 249.
- Samuel, N. B. (2012). “A syntactic analysis of Mada verb phrase.” (BA Project). Nasarawa State University, Keffi.
- Samuel, N.B. (2016). “Aspects of Mada verb phrase: A principles and parameters approach. (MA Dissertation). University of Ilorin, Nigeria.
- Smith, H. (1996). *Restrictiveness in case*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tallerman, M. (2005). *Understanding Syntax*. Hacheche UK: Hodder Education.
- Thomas, V. (2012). Double object constructions and ‘bill’ verbs in English. (MPhil Thesis). University of Oxford.
- Ouhalla, J (1994). *Introducing transformational grammar: From principles to parameters*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Yusuf, O. (1997). *Fundamentals of syntax and the study of Nigerian languages*. Ijebu-Ode: Shiebiotimo Publication.

