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The auxiliarization of *re* 'say' in Setswana

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1. *Re* 'say', a verb with several syntactic properties unique among Setswana verbs. The Setswana verb *re* [r̩] 'say'¹ is in many respects unique. Morphologically, *re* has the possibilities of variation characterizing the regular verbs of Setswana, but in these variations, it shows several irregularities: in its tonal behavior (*re* generally has the tonal behavior of a lexically toneless verb, but in the perfect tense, it may optionally behave like a lexically H-toned verb or like a lexically toneless verb), in its final vowel (in the perfect tense, it has the regular ending *-ile*, but in the other tenses, it invariably ends with *-e* [ɪ], whereas regular verbs end with *-e* [ɪ] in certain tenses only and take an ending *-a* [a] or *-e* [ɛ] in other tenses)² and in the way its initial consonant alternates (in Setswana, *r* normally alternates with *th* in contexts triggering the alternation known as 'consonant strengthening', but the *r* of *re* alternates with *t*, and this alternation occurs in contexts in which the initial consonant of regular verbs is not strengthened). Syntactically, *re* combines with a subject NP in the same way as other Setswana verbs do, but in its relationship with its other arguments, it has properties that distinguish it from any other Setswana verb.

Re is the only Setswana verb that can be directly followed by a complement clause showing the same form as an independent declarative or hortative sentence – ex. (1); the other verbs of saying, thinking, etc. require the use of a complementizer which is in fact the infinitive or a participial form of the verb *re* – ex. (2).

- (1a) **Ba tlaa tla kamoso** / báttááttà kámòsò / They will come tomorrow
- (1b) **Ba rile** [ba tlaa tla kamoso] / bárlé báttááttà kámòsò / They said they would come tomorrow / **ba rile** [bárlé] is the perfect of *re* with a SM of cl 2
- (2a) **O ya ko Kanye** / ójà kó kàné / He is going to Kanye
- (2b) **O re boleletse** [gore [o ya ko Kanye]] / órbólélétsí χórì ójà kó kàné / He told us that he was going to Kanye / **o re boleletse** [órbólélétsí] is the perfect of the applicative form of *bolela* 'say, report' with a SM of cl 1 and an OM of 1st ps pl; the complementizer **gore** is morphologically the infinitive of *re* 'say'

Re cannot take a NP as its complement: apart from clauses and ideophones, its only possible complements are **eng?** 'what?', **jaana** 'like this' or **jalo** 'like that'.

Re is also the only Setswana verb that freely combines with the so-called ideophones; the combination of *re* with an ideophone constitutes a kind of compound syntactically equivalent to a verb form, the grammatical elements of a verb form (subject marker, object marker, TAM markers) being all attached to *re*, whereas the lexical meaning and the argument structure of such a compound are entirely determined by the ideophone, as in ex. (3).

In addition to that, *re* is monosemous only when followed by a clausal complement; when followed by **eng?** 'what?', **jaana** 'like this' or **jalo** 'like that', depending on the context, its subject may represent not only a person saying something, but also a person to whom something happens – ex. (4).

Re presents also the following anomaly: it is employed in the -a consecutive³ with the meaning normally carried by the present – ex (5).

- (3) **O ne a tsaya mmidi a o re goro! fa fatshe** / óné àtsájá m̀mídí àórí χòrò fá fátshí / He then took the maize and poured it out on the ground / **goro** [χòrò] is an ideophone denoting the pouring out of solid contents; **a o re** [àórí] is the a-consecutive of **re** with a SM of cl 1 and an OM of cl 3 representing **mmidi** 'maize'
- (4) **Ba rile eng?** / bárlé ùŋ / What did they say?, or What happened to them? (depending on the context) / **ba rile** [bárlé] is the perfect of **re** with a SM of cl 2
- (5) **Ngaka ya re eng?** / ñàkà jàrì ùŋ / What is the doctor saying? / **ya re** [jàrì] is the a-consecutive of **re** with a SM of cl 9, i.e. a form which would normally be expected to mean 'and then (s)he_{cl.9} said', and not '(s)he_{cl.9} is saying'

The aim of this paper is to analyze a construction characterized by the occurrence of grammaticalized forms of **re** whose precise status calls for a discussion.

2. Presentation of the data analyzed in this paper. Setswana sentences carrying a meaning identical to that of biclausal English sentences 'When S₁, S₂' may follow a pattern that can be provisionally described as a sequence of three positions labeled X, Y and Z:

- position X is occupied by an inflected form of the verb **re**;
- in the English translation, Y corresponds to clause S₁ in a construction 'When S₁, S₂'; its predicate is in a so-called participial form, i.e. in a form typically employed as the predicate of dependent clauses of time;
- in the English translation, Z corresponds to clause S₂ in a construction 'When S₁, S₂', with however an important difference: the Setswana equivalent of an English sentence with a negative clause S₂ may be a sentence with a positive clause in position Z, the negation being then expressed by the inflected form of **re** in position X – ex. (7), (10), (13), (15) & (17).

Morphologically, the inflected form of **re** in position X includes a SM, but this SM has no meaning of its own, since it may equally be an invariable SM of class 9 or the copy of the SM of the following verb, without any difference in the meaning. It is interesting to observe that this SM is tonally irregular. In a number of tenses, Setswana has a tonal contrast between low-toned SMs in the 1st or in the 2nd person and high-toned SMs in the third person⁴; in these tenses, the invariable SM of class 9 included in the inflected form of **re** in position X in the sentence pattern analyzed here may optionally have a L tone (and this is the only context in which this irregularity is observed). We shall return to this later.

Ex. (6) to (17) illustrate this sentence pattern.⁵

- (6) [X **E rile**] [Y **ba bangwe ba ya kwa masimong**] [Z **ene a sala mo gae**] / ìrìlè bá bāŋwí bájá kwá māsímóŋ èné àsàlá mó χâ / When the others went to the field, (s)he remained at home / **e rile** [ìrìlè] is the perfect positive of **re** with an expl SM of cl 9, and **a sala** [àsàlá] is the a-consecutive of **sala** 'remain' with a SM of cl 1

- (7) [**X Ga e a re**] [**Y ba bangwe ba ya kwa masimong**] [**Z ene a sala mo gae**] / **χààrì** bá bàṅwí bájá kwá màsímóŋ èné àsàlá mó χàì / When the others went to the field, (s)he did not remain at home / **ga e a re** [**χààrì**] is the perfect negative of **re** with an expl SM of cl 9, and a **sala** [àsàlá] is the a-consecutive of **sala** 'remain' with a SM of cl 1
- (8) [**X Ya re**] [**Y ba bangwe ba ya kwa masimong**] [**Z ene a sala mo gae**] / **jàrì** bá bàṅwí bájá kwá màsímóŋ èné àsàlá mó χàì / ... And when the others went to the field, (s)he remained at home / **ya re** [jàrì] is the a-consecutive of **re** with an expl SM of cl 9, and a **sala** [àsàlá] is the a-consecutive of **sala** 'remain' with a SM of cl 1
- (9) [**X E tlaa re**] [**Y ba bangwe ba ya kwa masimong**] [**Z ene a sale mo gae**] / **ìtṭààrì** bá bàṅwí bájá kwá màsímóŋ èné àsàlì mó χàì / When the others go to the field, (s)he will remain at home / **e tlaa re** [ìtṭààrì] is the future positive of **re** with an expl SM of cl 9, and a **sale** [àsàlì] is the e-consecutive⁶ of **sala** 'remain' with a SM of cl 1
- (10) [**X E tlaa se ke e re**] [**Y ba bangwe ba ya kwa masimong**] [**Z ene a sale mo gae**] / **ìtṭààsíkì ìrì** bá bàṅwí bájá kwá màsímóŋ èné àsàlì mó χàì / When the others go to the field, (s)he will not remain at home / **e tlaa se ke e re** [ìtṭààsíkì ìrì] is the future negative of **re** with an expl SM of cl 9, and a **sale** [àsàlì] is the e-consecutive of **sala** 'remain' with a SM of cl 1
- (11) [**X E re**] [**Y ba bangwe ba ya kwa masimong**] [**Z ene a sale mo gae**] / **ìrì** bá bàṅwí bájá kwá màsímóŋ èné àsàlì mó χàì / ... And when the others go to the field, (s)he usually remains at home / **e re** [ìrì] is the e-consecutive of **re** with an expl SM of cl 9, and a **sale** [àsàlì] is the e-consecutive of **sala** 'remain' with a SM of cl 1
- (12) [**X E (a) re**] [**Y ba bangwe ba ya kwa masimong**] [**Z ene a sale mo gae**] / **ì(à)rì** bá bàṅwí bájá kwá màsímóŋ èné àsàlì mó χàì / When the others go to the field, (s)he remains at home / **e (a) re** [ì(à)rì] is the present positive⁷ of **re** with an expl SM of cl 9, and a **sale** [àsàlì] is the e-consecutive of **sala** 'remain' with a SM of cl 1
- (13) [**X Ga e re**] [**Y ba bangwe ba ya kwa masimong**] [**Z ene a sale mo gae**] / **χàìrì** bá bàṅwí bájá kwá màsímóŋ èné àsàlì mó χàì / When the others go to the field, (s)he does not remain at home / **ga e re** [χàìrì] is the present negative of **re** with an expl SM of cl 9, and a **sale** [àsàlì] is the e-consecutive of **sala** 'remain' with a SM of cl 1
- (14) [**X E ka re**] [**Y ba bangwe ba ya kwa masimong**] [**Z ene a sala mo gae**] / **ìkàrì** bá bàṅwí bájá kwá màsímóŋ èné àsàlá mó χàì / When the others go to the field, (s)he may remain at home / **e ka re** [ìkàrì] is the potential positive of **re** with an expl SM of cl 9, and a **sala** [àsàlá] is the a-consecutive of **sala** 'remain' with a SM of cl 1

- (15) [X E ka se re] [Y ba bangwe ba ya kwa masimong] [Z ene a sala mo gae] / *íkásírí bá bǎŋwí bájá kwá màsímoŋ èné ásálá mó χâi* / When the others go to the field, (s)he may not remain at home / e ka se re [íkásírí] is the potential negative of re with an expl SM of cl 9, and a sala [ásálá] is the a-consecutive of sala 'remain' with a SM of cl 1
- (16) [X E re] [Y ba bangwe ba ya kwa masimong] [Z ene a sale mo gae] / *írí bá bǎŋwí bájá kwá màsímoŋ èné ásálé mó χâi* / When the others go to the field, (s)he must remain at home / e re [írí] is the subjunctive positive of re with an expl SM of cl 9, and a sale [ásálé] is the subjunctive of sala 'remain' with a SM of cl 1
- (17) [X E se re] [Y ba bangwe ba ya kwa masimong] [Z ene a sale mo gae] / *ísírí bá bǎŋwí bájá kwá màsímoŋ èné ásálé mó χâi* / When the others go to the field, (s)he must not remain at home / e se re [ísírí] is the subjunctive negative of re with an expl SM of cl 9, and a sale [ásálé] is the subjunctive of sala 'remain' with a SM of cl 1

The position occupied by the inflected forms of **re** in this construction is apparently identical to that of **when** in the English translation, which suggests that they should be analyzed as taking on, in relation to the clause in position Y, the function of complementizer. But this analysis faces serious objections, and the precise status of **re** in this construction is not easy to establish. The way Cole treats it in his reference grammar of Setswana⁸ clearly reveals the difficulty he had in making a decision on this issue: he describes this use of **re** in the chapter devoted to what he calls 'special verb tenses', which implies analyzing the forms of **re** in this construction as fulfilling the auxiliary function, but at the same time he indicates that they "behave very much like conjunctives" and that they "constitute the main verb".

The analysis put forward in this paper is that, in the present state of Setswana, the status of the inflected form of **re** occupying position X in this sentence pattern cannot be established in an entirely satisfying way in a strictly synchronic framework; the inflected form of **re** in position X must generally be analyzed as an auxiliary, but its behavior differs in some respects from that of the most typical Setswana auxiliaries, and we shall examine a variant of this construction in which the inflected form of **re** in position X does not behave as an auxiliary anymore and can be reanalyzed as a complementizer introducing a subordinate clause of time.

3. Evidence against analyzing the inflected form of re occurring in initial position in the sentence pattern illustrated by ex. (6) to (17) as a complementizer introducing a subordinate clause of time. In this section I examine the possibility of an analysis according to which the main predicate is the verb of the clause in position Z and X is the complementizer introducing the embedded clause Y, and I present observations showing that, if we leave aside a variant of this construction to which we will return in section 8, the analysis of the inflected form of **re** in position X as a complementizer of the clause in position Y must be abandoned.

The main evidence against this analysis is that position Y in such a sequence cannot be left empty, but is not necessarily occupied by a dependent clause of time with a participial predicate; it may also be occupied by an infinitive, a prepositional phrase, a noun phrase, an adverb with a temporal meaning, or a word meaning 'perhaps' – ex. (18) to (22).

- (18) [X **E (a) re**] [Y **go lwala**] [Z **ene a sale mo gae**] / ì(à)rì χòlwálá èné asáìlì mó χáì / When (s)he is sick, (s)he remains at home / **e (a) re** [ì(à)rì] is the present of **re** with an expl SM of cl 9, **a sale** [asáìlì] is the e-consecutive of **sala** 'remain' with a SM of cl 1, and **go lwala** is the infinitive of **lwala** 'be sick'
- (19) [X **E rìle**] [Y **fa morago ga foo**] [Z **ene a sala mo gae**] / ìrìlè fà mòràχò χáfoó èné asálà mó χáì / After that, (s)he remained at home / **e rìle** [ìrìlè] is the perfect of **re** with an expl SM of cl 9, **a sala** [àsálà] is the a-consecutive of **sala** 'remain' with a SM of cl 1, and **fa morago ga foo** is a prepositional phrase whose literal meaning is 'in back of that'
- (20) [X **E tlaa re**] [Y **kamoso**] [Z **ene a sale mo gae**] / ìtłààrì kámòsò èné asáìlì mó χáì / Tomorrow (s)he will remain at home / **e tlaa re** [ìtłààrì] is the future of **re** with an expl SM of cl 9, **a sale** [asáìlì] is the e-consecutive of **sala** 'remain' with a SM of cl 1, and **kamoso** is the Setswana equivalent of English 'tomorrow'
- (21) [X **E rìle**] [Y **gongwe**] [Z **ene a sala mo gae**] / ìrìlè χòŋwì èné àsálà mó χáì / Perhaps (s)he remained at home / **e rìle** [ìrìlè] is the perfect of **re** with an expl SM of cl 9, **a sala** [àsálà] is the a-consecutive of **sala** 'remain' with a SM of cl 1, and **gongwe** is a Setswana equivalent of English 'perhaps'
- (22) [X **E tlaa re**] [Y **kgotsa**] [Z **ene a sale mo gae**] / ìtłààrì qhòtsà èné àsáìlì mó χáì / Perhaps (s)he will remain at home / **e tlaa re** [ìtłààrì] is the future of **re** with an expl SM of cl 9, **a sale** [asáìlì] is the e-consecutive of **sala** 'remain' with a SM of cl 1, and **kgotsa** is another Setswana equivalent of English 'perhaps'

4. Evidence against considering that the verb of the clause occupying position Z in the sentence pattern illustrated by ex. (6) to (17) constitutes by itself the main predicate. Let us now turn to observations showing that the verb of the clause in position Z cannot be considered as constituting by itself the main predicate of this construction, and that the only possible analyses are that the main predicate in this construction is, either the inflected form of **re** in position X, or the combination of the inflected form of **re** in position X and of the verb of the clause in position Z.

4.1. In the sentence pattern illustrated by examples (6) to (17), the inflected form of **re** in position X shows the full range of tense variations characteristic of verbs fulfilling the predicate function in independent clauses. By contrast, the predicate of the clause in position Z is in a dependent form (a-consecutive, e-consecutive or subjunctive), and its tense variations are determined by those of **re**, as shown in the following chart:

inflected form of **re** in position X

verb of the clause occupying position Z

present
future
e-consecutive
perfect
potential
a-consecutive
subjunctive

e-consecutive
e-consecutive
e-consecutive
a-consecutive
a-consecutive
a-consecutive
subjunctive

- (25b) **Molelo o** [[_X **e rileng**] [_Y **go robalwa**] [_Z **wa gotsiwa mo tlung**]] **o sa ntse o tuka** / mòlìlò ó úrìlèṅ ǰòròbàlwà wàǰòtsìwà mó tḽṅ ṱsàntsi ṱtuka / The fire that was lit in the house when people went to bed is still burning / **e rileng** [úrìlèṅ] is the relative form of the perfect positive of **re** with an expl SM of cl 9, **go robalwa** [ǰòròbàlwà] is the infinitive of the passive form of **robala** 'lie down and sleep', **wa gotsiwa** [wàǰòtsìwà] is the a-consecutive of the passive form of **gotsa** 'light' with a SM of cl 3

In other words, the inflected form of **re** in position X behaves in this respect as if it were, either the main predicate of the sentence, or the first element of a compound main predicate. Any other analysis would be in contradiction with this aspect of the behavior of **re**.

4.3. From the observations presented in 4.1. and 4.2. it follows that **re** in the construction we are examining maintains more verbal properties and shows a closer relationship to the verb of the clause in position Z than we could have expected by only taking into account its position at the very beginning of this construction and the usual translation of this construction into English. One must agree with Cole's statement that "Though these forms are translated idiomatically by 'when', 'whenever', 'if', etc., in English, it is clear that fundamentally they express the idea of happening". In other words, non-idiomatic translations such as the following ones would certainly be closer to the Setswana sentences quoted in ex. (6) to (17) than those given above, both in structure and in meaning:

- (6) It happened that, the others going to the field, (s)he remained at home
- (7) It did not happen that, the others going to the field, (s)he remained at home
- (8) ... And it happened that, the others going to the field, (s)he remained at home
- (9) It will happen that, the others going to the field, (s)he will remain at home
- (10) It will not happen that, the others going to the field, (s)he will remain at home
- (11) ... And it will happen that, the others going to the field, (s)he will remain at home
- (12) It happens that, the others going to the field, (s)he remains at home
- (13) It does not happen that, the others going to the field, (s)he remains at home
- (14) It may happen that, the others going to the field, (s)he remains at home
- (15) It may not happen that, the others going to the field, (s)he remains at home
- (16) It must happen that, the others going to the field, (s)he remains at home
- (17) It must not happen that, the others going to the field, (s)he remains at home

However, the fact that such translations are undoubtedly relatively close to the structure of the Setswana sentences does not imply that they reflect every detail of the structure of their Setswana equivalents, and the question of the precise status of **re** in this constructions remains to be discussed.

5. Evidence against considering that the inflected form of re occurring in initial position in the sentence pattern illustrated by ex. (6) to (17) constitutes by itself the main predicate. We must therefore go on to discuss the analysis according to which, in the sentence pattern illustrated by ex. (6) to (17), the inflected form of **re** in position X is the exact equivalent of English **happen** in 'It happened that ...', i.e. the main predicate, the clause in position Z being then analyzed as its complement.

In fact, it is not very difficult to convince oneself that this analysis too must be rejected: the morphosyntactic properties of the inflected form of **re** occupying

position X in the Setswana construction analyzed here are different from those of regular Setswana verbs introducing clausal complements, and in particular from those manifested by **re** itself in other constructions where its behavior is clearly the behavior of a verb fulfilling the predicate function.

At first sight, it seems possible to relate the construction illustrated by ex. (6) to (17) to the construction in which **re** has a subject representing a person concerned by an event, as in ex. (26).

- (26) **Ngwana o rile eng?** / ɲwàná órìlé ǎ / What happened to the child?⁹ / o rile [órílé] is the perfect of **re** with a SM of cl 1, **eng** is the interrogative 'what?'

Unfortunately, the use of **re** analyzed here cannot be considered, at least from the synchronic point of view, as a mere subjectless (or 'impersonal') variant of the use of **re** illustrated by ex. (26), since according to the productive rules of Setswana grammar, subjectless (or 'impersonal') verb forms take an expletive SM of class 17 (and not of class 9). Ex. (27) illustrates the subjectless construction that regularly corresponds to ex. (26).

- (27) **Go rile eng mo ngwaneng?** / χórílé ǎ mó ɲwànéŋ / What happened to the child? / go rile [χórílé] is the perfect of **re** with an expl SM of cl 17, **eng** is the interrogative 'what?', **mo** is a preposition, and **ngwaneng** is the locative form of **ngwana** 'child'

The use of the SM of class 9 as an expletive SM in the construction analyzed here makes it impossible to analyze this construction, within the limits of present-day Setswana grammar, as involving a subjectless use of the verb **re** fulfilling the predicate function. Moreover, it has already been observed that in this construction (and only in this construction), **re** has a toneless SM of class 9 in tenses in which the SM of class 9 is normally high-toned, and this provides further evidence against the analysis of **re** as constituting by itself the main predicate of sentences such as ex. (6) to (17). The point is that in Proto-Bantu, the tenses in question had a low-toned (or toneless) SM in the 1st person, in the 2nd person, in class 1 and in class 9, and a high-toned SM in the other classes. In Setswana, the SMs of class 1 and 9 in the tenses in question became high-toned by analogy with the other classes. The fact that **re** maintains a toneless SM in the construction analyzed here is certainly an indication that the forms of the verb **re** occurring in this construction had already undergone a process of decategorialization at the time when this change occurred.

Another argument against considering the clause occupying position Z in the construction analyzed here as the complement of **re** is that, when **re** as a verb meaning 'say' has a clausal complement, the verb fulfilling the predicate function in the complement clause occurs in tenses characteristic of independent clauses, and the choice of its tense is independent from the choice of the tense of **re**. By contrast, the possible combinations of tenses observed in the construction illustrated by ex. (6) to (17) are identical with those observed in the consecutive construction, illustrated by ex. (28) to (32).

- (28) **Ke ile Gauteng ka etela ditsala tsa me** / kùlé χàutéŋ kàètèlà dìtsàlá tsámì / I went to Jo'burg and visited my friends / the first verb – **ke ile** 'I went' – is in the perfect, the second one – **ka etela** – is in the a-consecutive

(42) * **Ya re**

* **Ya re ba bangwe ba ya kwa masimong**

Therefore, the clause occupying position Z in this sentence pattern cannot be analyzed (by itself or in combination with Y) as the second member of a consecutive construction, in spite of the fact that the tense variations of its verb are identical to those of verbs fulfilling the predicate function in the non-initial clauses of a consecutive construction.

The way negation functions in the sentence pattern illustrated by examples (6) to (17) provides additional evidence that this analysis must be rejected. Ex. (7), (10), (13), (15) & (17) show that the inflected form of **re** in position X may be in the negative form, and that the clause in position Z is within the scope of a negation morphologically affecting the inflected form of **re** in position X. By contrast, in a true consecutive construction, a non-initial clause cannot be within the scope of a negation morphologically affecting the verb of the first clause. For example, if we want to express something like 'I did not go to Jo'burg and I did not go to Pretoria either', both verbs must be in the negative form – ex. (43). A consecutive construction with the first verb in the negative form and the second one in the positive form is usual only with a connective between the two verbs – ex. (44), but, even in the absence of a connective, the only possible interpretation is that the second verb is outside the scope of the negation of the first one.

(43) **Ga ke a ya Gauteng ka se ka ka ya Tshwane** / χàkìàjà χàutéñ
kàsìkà kàja tshwànì / I did not go to Jo'burg and I did not go to Pretoria
either / the first verb – **ga ke a ya** – is in the perfect negative, the second one – **ka se
ka ka ya** – is in the a-consecutive negative

(44) **Ga ke a ya Gauteng mme ka ya Tshwane** / χàkìàjà χàutéñ ñmí kàjà
tshwànì / I did not go to Jo'burg but I went to Pretoria / the first verb – **ga ke
a ya** – is in the perfect negative, the second one – **ka ya** – is in the a-consecutive
positive

7. Conclusion: the inflected form of *re* occurring in initial position in the sentence pattern analyzed here is an auxiliary, but the position it occupies is not the normal position of Setswana auxiliaries. As regards negation, the relationship between the inflected form of **re** in position X and the verb of the clause in position Z has the same properties as the relationship between the auxiliary and the main verb in a number of compound verb forms which, from the diachronic point of view, are probably frozen consecutive constructions.

More generally, the conclusion we can draw from the preceding discussion is that the analysis according to which the inflected form of **re** in position X and the verb of the clause in position Z constitute a single predicate is the only one that does not raise important difficulties. In other words, what seems at first sight to be the verb form assuming the predicate function in the clause in position Z is best analyzed as constituting only the second part of a compound verb form whose first part (i.e. the auxiliary) is the inflected form of **re** in position X.

According to this analysis, the simple tenses of the Setswana verb have compound variants characterized by the use of **re** as the auxiliary. Semantically, these compound forms emphasize the idea of happening. For example:

simple tenses

- o (a) **sala** (s)he remains
 o **tlaa sala** (s)he will remain
 o **setse** (s)he remained
 o **ka sala** (s)he may remain

compound variants with the auxiliary re

- e (a) **re ... a sale**
 e **tlaa re ... a sale**
 e **rile ... a sala**
 e **ka re ... a sale**

This analysis is not entirely satisfying, since the behavior of **re** is different from that of typical Setswana auxiliaries in at least two respects: the SM of typical Setswana auxiliaries necessarily varies in agreement with the subject (whereas **re** may have an invariable SM of class 9, the agreement with the subject being then manifest in the main verb only), and typical Setswana auxiliaries usually occur immediately before the main verb and never precede the subject NP (whereas the auxiliary **re** precedes the subject NP and is necessarily separated from it (and from the main verb) by the constituent in position Y).

However, there are in Setswana other cases of constructions which must be analyzed as compound verb forms in spite of the fact that they raise similar problems: the auxiliary **sa le** 'it happened long ago that ...' may optionally have a SM identical with the SM of the main verb, an invariable SM of class 9, or even no SM at all, and the auxiliary **tswa**, in a construction meaning that a situation has continued from a given point in the past until now, is necessarily separated from the main verb by a constituent referring to that point of time, as in ex. (45).

- (45) **O tswa bongwaneng a rata dijo tse** / ótswá bǒŋwǎnèŋ áráta dìǰó tsè / (S)he has liked this food since (s)he was a child / **bongwaneng**, the locative form of **bongwana** 'childhood', is inserted between the two parts of the compound verb form **o tswa ... a rata** – literally '(s)he comes from ... liking'

8. The possibility of a subsequent reanalysis. In the preceding sections, I tried to show that inflected forms of the verb **re** that at first sight seem to fulfill the function of complementizer introducing a subordinate clause of time S₁ in a construction '**re** S₁ S₂' are best analyzed, in the present state of Setswana, as the first element of a compound verb form fulfilling the function of predicate of clause S₂. A crucial point in this analysis is that, in this construction, the constituent immediately following the inflected form of the verb **re** is not necessarily a clause: it may be a noun phrase, a prepositional phrase or an adverb. However, in Setswana texts, the occurrences of the auxiliary **re** immediately followed by a subordinate clause of time are far more numerous than the occurrences of the auxiliary **re** followed by another type of constituent. In other words, **re** as an auxiliary emphasizing the idea of happening occurs mainly in a context making it possible to reanalyze it as a complementizer introducing a subordinate clause, and it is interesting to note that some observations suggest that such a process is beginning to develop in Setswana.

In section 4, I insisted on the fact that the verb fulfilling the predicate function in the clause occupying position Z occurs in a dependent form, and that its form is entirely determined by the inflected form of **re** in position X. However, this is not always true. Setswana speakers sometimes use sentences almost identical to those following the pattern analyzed in the preceding sections, but in which the verb fulfilling the predicate function in the clause occupying position Z is in an

independent form. For example, instead of (12) (repeated here as (46)), with **sala** in the e-consecutive, it is possible to find (47), with **sala** in the indicative present.

- (46) **E (a) re ba bangwe ba ya kwa masimong ene a sale mo gae /**
ì(à)rì bá bàŋwí bájá kwá mäsímòŋ èné ásàlì mó χàì / When the others go
to the field, (s)he remains at home / a sale [ásàlì] is the e-consecutive of sala
'remain'
- (47) **E (a) re ba bangwe ba ya kwa masimong ene o sala mo gae /**
ì(à)rì bá bàŋwí bájá kwá mäsímòŋ èné ósàlá mó χàì / When the others go
to the field, (s)he remains at home / o sala [ósàlá] is the indicative present of sala
'remain'

This construction, in which the relationship between the two elements of a compound verb form is broken, does not seem very frequent, and when questioned about it, Setswana speakers often seem rather reluctant to accept it. But it does exist, and its existence is already mentioned in Cole 1955. This means that the grammaticalization of **re** into an auxiliary emphasizing the sense of happening could well be followed by a reanalysis of this auxiliary into a complementizer introducing temporal clauses.

¹ Setswana has two other verbs corresponding in certain contexts to English 'say' or 'tell': **bolela** 'say', 'tell', 'report' (as in **O mpoletse dilo tse di kgathang** 'He told me interesting things') and **bua** 'say', 'tell', 'speak' (as in **Bua nnete** 'Tell the truth'). By contrast with **re**, they are morphologically regular, and their syntactic behavior is that of ordinary transitive verbs.

² **Itse** 'know' and **lere** 'bring' show the same irregularity.

³ The a-consecutive is a tense typically used in sequences of clauses referring to sequences of past events or to sequences of conditional events – see ex. (28) & (29) below.

⁴ See Creissels & al., forthcoming.

⁵ Note that, in the absence of a wider context, the written form of the sentence is sometimes ambiguous, and that a precise transcription of vowels and of tone is necessary in order to identify the form of **re** in position X and/or the form of the verb fulfilling the predicate function in Z.

⁶ The e-consecutive is a tense typically used in sequences of clauses referring to sequences of future events or to sequences of habitual events – see ex. (30) & (31) below.

⁷ In this construction, the 'short' form and the 'long' form of the present of **re** are interchangeable. This is an irregularity, since in principle, the choice between these two forms expresses distinctions in the discursive structure of the utterance – see Creissels 1996. It is interesting to observe that several auxiliaries show the same irregularity.

⁸ See Cole 1955, p. 302.

⁹ This sentence may equally be interpreted as 'What did the child say?'; the choice between these two interpretations entirely depends on the context.

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