

Class 17 as a Non-Locative Noun Class in Zulu*

Leston Buell

dr.bulbul@yahoo.com

<http://www.fizzylogic.com/users/bulbul/academic.html>

Bantu 3 conference; Tervuren; March 24-28, 2009.

This corrected, expanded version compiled on March 29, 2009.

1 Class 17: locative and not

Zulu has vestiges of class 16 only in a few vocabulary items. However, class 17 appears in various places throughout the grammatical system.

Class 17 as locative. A few uses.

- (1) Ngi-sebenza edolobhe-ni, kodwa a-ngi-hlali *khona*.
1s.SM-work LOC:5city-LOC but NEG-1s.SM-stay 17PRON
'I work in Durban, but I don't live there.'

Class 17 as non-locative. Also a few uses.

- (2) *Lokho* kw-enza umzimba u-be n-amathuba amanengi...
17that 17SM-make 3body 3SM-be with-6opportunities 6many
'That gives the body a lot of opportunities to...' (Xhosa) (Google)

Subject agreement. Is this ever locative? Maybe not.

- (3) *Ku*-fik-e izingane.
17SM-arrive-PERF 10children
'The children/some children have come.'

Goals.

- Show range of uses of class 17 in Zulu.
- Show that class 17 is a predominantly non-locative class in Zulu. (See also Marten (2009).)
- Show that class 17 subject agreement is not amenable to a single analysis.

*I would like to thank the following people: my Zulu informant Meritta Xaba and French informant Dominique Sportiche; Lisa Cheng, Michael Dierks, Laura Downing, Myles Leitch, Kristina Riedel, Thilo Schadeberg, Jenneke van der Wal, and Marianna Visser.

2 Clearly locative uses

***Khona* ‘there’.** At least superficially, *khona* ‘there’ belongs to a series of regularly formed pronouns:

- (4) mina, thina, lona, sona, kona, ***khona***
 1S.PRON 1P.PRON 5PRON 7PRON 15PRON 17PRON
 ‘I, we, it, it, it, ***there***’

Khona is non-deictic. It can be used in matrix clauses (see (1)). It is also used as a resumptive in locative and temporal relative clauses:

- (5) a. Ngi-sebenza ku-lesi sikole.
 1S.SM-work LOC-7this 7school
 ‘I work at this school.’
 b. Lesi yi-sikole lapho ngi-sebenza *(***khona***).
 7this COP-7school there 1S.SM-work 17PRON
 ‘This is the school where I work.’

Deictic ‘here’ and ‘there’ have residual class 16 morphology, not class 17:

- (6) a. *lapha* ‘here’, *lapho* ‘there’ (class 16)
 b. *lokhu* ‘this’, *lokho* ‘that’ (class 17)

Preposition *ku-* ‘in, to, from’. *Ku-* is used when the *e/o-...-ni* locative form cannot be used:

- (7) a. izindawo, ***e-***zindawe-***ni***
 10places LOC-10places-LOC
 ‘(the) places, in (the) places’
 b. lezi zindawo, ***ku-***lezi zindawo
 10these 10places LOC-10these 10places
 ‘these places, in these places’

There are no analogous prepositions related to historical classes 16 or 18.

Predicate *-kho(na)* ‘be present’. Distribution of *-kho* and *-khona*:

- (8) a. Ku-***khona*** imali eningi lapha.
 17SM-be.present 9money 9much here
 ‘There is a lot of money here.’
 b. A-ku-***kho*** mali eningi lapha.
 NEG-17SM-be.present 9money 9much here
 ‘There isn’t a lot of money here.’

In affirmative clauses where *khona* alternates with direct predication of a lexical locative, *-khona* seems to mean ‘be present’:

- (9) a. USipho u-sedolobh-eni.
 1Sipho 1SM-LOC:-5town-LOC
 ‘Sipho’s in town.’
 b. USipho u-**khona** edolobh-eni.
 1Sipho 1SM-be.present LOC:-5town-LOC
 ‘Sipho is present in town.’ (Informant’s translation.)

Case such as (9b) are probably best analysed as right dislocation of the lexical locative.

Negative clauses *-kho* is required with locative predicates and thus adds no meaning:

- (10) a. U-se-dolobhe-ni.
 1SM-LOC:-5town-LOC
 ‘He’s in town.’
 b. A-ke-**kho** e-dolobhe-ni.
 NEG-1SM-be.present LOC-5town-LOC
 ‘He’s not in town.’

Associative marker. The associative marker (‘of’) bears class 17 agreement in certain adverbial expressions which function as prepositions.

- (11) phansi **kwe**-mithi, phakathi **ka**-bantu
 under 17of-4trees, between 17of-2people
 ‘under the trees, among the people’

3 Clearly non-locative uses

Generic pronouns. These can be demonstrative:

- (12) UThandi u-na-manga. A-ngi-ku-thand-i **lokho**.
 1Thandi 1SM-with:5lies NEG-1S.SM-17OM-love-NEG 17that
 ‘Thandi lies. I don’t like that.’

Or it can be in the form of *konke* ‘everything’:

- (13) Bheka, ng-enza **konke** ku-be kusha.
 look 1S.SM-make 17all 17SM-be 17new
 ‘Behold, I make all things new.’ (Revelation 20:4)
 (14) S-enza **konke** oku-semandle-ni ethu.
 1P.SM-do 17all REL:17SMLOC:6power-LOC 6our
 ‘We’re doing everything in our power.’

Swati -ko. The (invariable) relative clause enclitic in Zulu and Xhosa looks like class 9, while in Swati it looks like class 17:

- (15) a. la maswidi eni-sa-wa-dla-**yo** (Zulu)
 6those 6sweets REL:2P.SM-still-6om-eat-REL
 b. la-maswidi leni-sa-wa-dla-**ko** (Swati)
 6those-6sweets REL:2P.SM-still-6om-eat-REL
 ‘those sweets that you’re still eating’

4 Class 17 subject agreement

Non-locative agreement.

- Referential agreement with *pro* or overt DP.
Cases of this are seen in (14) and (2). Such cases are straightforward and will not be discussed.
- Expletive agreement
 - Big DP (Dierks 2008).

(16) *pro*_{[17]i} Ku-fik-e [DP *t_i* [DP izingane]]
 17SM-arrive-PERF 10children

‘Children have arrived.’

- Inserted in preverbal subject position or moved from thematic domain.

Conceptualising locative subject agreement. There are perhaps three conceivable ways in which class 17 subject agreement could conceivably be locative:

- Referential locative:

(17) Chumba-ni mu-li-kuwa muzuri. (Swahili)
 7room-LOC 18SM-PST-be 18pretty
 ‘The (inside of) the room was pretty.’ (Buell 2008a)

(18) * Phansi k-omuthi ku-khulu. (Zulu)
under 17SM.of-3tree 17-big
intended: 'The area under the tree is big.'

- Raised predicate (Moro 1997):

(19) There_i is [_{SC} [_{DP} no such thing as an allomorpheme] *t_i*.]

- Non-referential locative:

(20) *pro*_i Ku-fik-e izingane *t*_i.
 17S-arrive-PERF 10children
 ‘Some children arrived.’

4.1 Situational subject

(21) *pro Ku-lung-ile.*
17SM-be.fine-PERF
'Okay. That's fine.'

(22) *pro* ***Ku***-hle kakhulu.
17SM-beautiful very
'Very good!'

- *Pro* here could be a kind of referential *it* that refers to a situation. -*Hle* would seem to need to be predicated of something to have its theta roles saturated, while expletives by definition do not bear a theta role.
- If it were expletive, could a *pro* subject be moved from a big DP? There isn't any visible DP.

4.2 Seeming

Zulu uses class 17 subject agreement for ‘seem’:

- (23) ***Ku***-bonakala ukuthi ba-zo-fika kusasa. (Zulu)
 17SM-DJ-seem that 2SM-FUT-arrive tomorrow
 ‘It seems that they’ll arrive tomorrow.’ (Buell 2007)

Other languages make a distinction between *it* and *there*:

- (24) a. Je, hapa ***ku***-na uhuru wa habari? (Google)
 well here 17SM-with 11freedom 11of 10news
 ‘Is there from of the press here?’
 b. ***I***-na-onekana kwamba.... (Swahili)
 9SM-PRES-seem that
 ‘It seems that....’

- (25) It/*There seems that pigs can’t fly.

This makes us think that the subject in (23) is different from that in, say, inversions, even though they are morphologically identical in Zulu.

If the *pro* in (23) is expletive, it could be introduced either in its surface position or inside a big DP containing the embedded clause (*ukuthi...*).

4.3 Copular clause

A copular clause (nominal predicate) may take either normal subject agreement or class 17 agreement:

- (26) a. USipho ***w***-a-***ye***-ngu-mngane wethu.
 1Sipho 1SM-PST-1SM-COP-1friend 1our
 b. U-Sipho ***kw***-a-***ku***-ngu-mngane wethu.
 1Sipho 17SM-PST-17SM-COP-1friend 1our
 ‘Sipho was a out friend.’

Nominal predicates are the only type of predicate that can do this:

- (27) a. USipho ***kw***-a-***ku***-ngu-mngane wami. (nominal predicate)
 Sipho 17SM-PST-17SM-COP-1friend 1my
 ‘Sipho was my friend.’
 b. * USipho ***kw***-a-***ku***-mdala. (adjectival predicate)
 1Sipho 17SM-PST-17SM-1old
 intended: ‘Sipho was old.’
 c. * USipho ***ku***-se-dolobhe-ni. (locative predicate)
 1Sipho 17SM-LOC-5town-LOC
 intended: ‘Sipho is in town.’
 d. * USipho ***ku***-fik-ile. (verbal predicate)
 1Sipho 17SM-arrive-PERF
 intended: ‘Sipho has arrived.’

This is reminiscent of the distribution of *ce* in French and of *het* in Dutch:

- (28) a. ✓Elle / ✓C' est mon amie, Marie. (nominal predicate)
 she this is my friend Marie
 'Marie is my friend.'
- b. ✓Elle / *C' est sympathique, Marie. (adjectival predicate)
 she this is nice Marie
 'Marie is nice.'
- c. ✓Elle / *Ce / *Ça m' a beaucoup aidé, Marie. (verbal predicate)
 she this that me has much helped Marie
 'Marie helped me a lot.'
- (29) a. Die Peter toch! ✓Het / ✓Hij is een schat. (nominal predicate)
 that Peter indeed it / he is a treasure
 'That Peter! He's a darling.'
- b. Die Peter toch! *Het / ✓Hij is schattig. (adjectival predicate)
 that Peter indeed it he is precious
 'That Peter! He's precious.'
- c. Die Peter toch! *Het / ✓Hij schreeuwt zo. (verbal predicate)
 that Peter indeed it he screams so
 'That Peter! He yells so much.'

The Zulu agreement alternation is not a question of free variation. There are syntactic differences between class 17 and agreement.

If the 'subject' is quantified by 'all' class 17 agreement is ungrammatical:¹

- (30) a. [Bonke abafana] **b**-a-**be**-nga-bangane bethu.
 2all 2boys 2SM-PST-2SM-COP-2friends 2our
- b. * [Bonke abafana] **kw**-a-**ku**-nga-bangane bethu.
 2all 2boys 17SM-PST-17SM-COP-2friends 2our
 'All the boys were our friends.'

The 'subject' cannot be relativised if the subject agreement is class 17.

- (31) a. Ngi-funa abantu **aba**-nge-wona amasela.
 1S.SM-want 2people REL:2SM-COP-6PRON 6thieves
- b. * Ngi-funa abantu **oku**-nge-wona amasela.
 1S.SM-want 2people REL:17SM-COP-6PRON 6thieves
 'I'm looking for people who aren't thieves.'

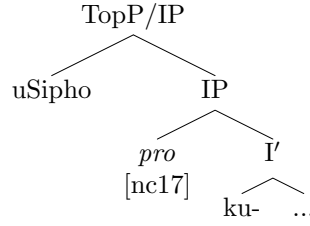
This is understandable if we consider class 17 subject agreement here to be the equivalent of French *ce*:

- (32) *Je cherche des gens qui ce ne soient pas des voleurs.

The lexical 'subject' is thus in a higher position (spec-TopP or adjunct to IP), while spec-IP is occupied by a *pro* with class 17 features:

¹ A more complicated asymmetry is found with 'every' (Buell 2008b).

(33)



This *pro* cannot be expletive, because its distribution is dependent on properties of the predicate. So, it must be non-expletive and introduced within the theta domain.

4.4 Conjoined subjects

A coördinated subject consisting of nouns of unlike classes may trigger class 17 subject agreement:

- (34) Izinkuni na-malahle **ku**-phel-ile.
10wood and-6coal 17SM-finish-PERF
‘The firewood and coal is finished.’ (Nyembezi 1970)

Mass nouns also trigger class 17 agreement even if they are of the same class:

- (35) a. Amaganu na-makhiwane **a**-y-imvelo. (individuable plurals)
6ganu and-6figs 17SM-COP-9nature
‘*Ganu* fruits and figs are natural.’
b. Amanzi na-mafutha **ku**-y-imvelo. (mass nouns)
6water and-6oil 17SM-COP-9nature
‘Water and oil are natural.’ (Lisa Cheng, p.c.)

Which analysis?

- As in (33), with a class 17 *pro* in spec-IP? If this is the correct analysis, then we predict that the lexical subject can’t be quantified with ‘all’ and that the subject can’t be relativised. This hasn’t been tested yet.
- Entire coördination structure gets class 17 features and occupies spec-IP:

- (36) [IP [DP_[17] DP_[6] na DP_[10]] [I' ku- ...

A variation on this analysis is that the coördination gets no features at all and that the subject agreement gets filled in on the subject marker as a default value.

4.5 Inversions

With preverbal locative. Evidence shows that the agreement *can’t* be referential when preceded by an overt locative phrase.

First, the locative can be resumed with *khona*, which is typical of A-bar movement:

- (37) Ku-lezi zindlu ku-hlala (**khona**) abantu abakhubazekile.
LOC-10these 10house 17SM-stay 17PRON 2people 2handicapped
‘In these ouses live handicapped people.’

- (38) a. Ku-le ndlu a-ngi-sa-hlal-i *(khona).
 LOC-9this 9house NEG-1S.SM-DUR-stay-NEG 17PRON
 ‘At this house I don’t live anymore.’
 b. indawo lapho ngi-hlala *(khona)
 9place there 1S.SM-stay 17PRON
 ‘the place where I live’

Second, relativisation shows that the preverbal locative cannot be the subject. Note that a relative clause cannot start with an adverb:

- (39) Nasi isithombe (*e-sikole-ni) engi-si-dweb-ile izolo.
 7there.is 7picutre LOC-7school-LOC REL:1S.SM-7OM-draw-PERF yesterday
 ‘Here is the picture that (at school) I drew yesterday.’

If *ensimi* in (41a) were the subject, then the clause should be grammatical:

- (40) umnumzane isitha es-a-bulala izinkomo zakhe
 9gentleman 7enemy REL:7SM-PST-kill 10cows 10his
 ‘the man whose cows the enemy killed’
 (41) a. * umnumzane e-nsimi-ni okw-a-bulawa izinkomo zakhe
 1gentleman LOC-9field-LOC REL:17SM-PST-kill:PSV 10cows 10his
 b. umnumzane okw-a-bulawa izinkomo zakhe e-nsimi-ni
 1gentleman REL:17SM-PST-kill:PSV 10cows 10his LOC-9field-LOC
 ‘the man whose cows were killed in the field’

Without preverbal locative. Since an overt initial locative is a topic, an analogous clause without a locative should receive essentially the same analysis.

- (42) a. I-zingane [zi-fik-ile.]
 10children 10SM-arrive-PERF
 ‘The children have come.’
 b. [**Ku**-fik-e izingane.]
 17SM-arrive-PERF 10children
 ‘The children/some children have come.’

The locative can’t be dropped like a *pro* subject, again showing that the subject cannot be referential:

- (43) Ngi-zi-bon-ile [lezo zindlu.]_i
 1S.SM-10OM-see-PERF 10those 10houses
 ‘I saw those houses.’
 a. *pro*_i A-**zi**-hlal-i muntu.
 NEG-10SM-stay-neg BARE:1person
 ‘Nobody lives there.’
 b. # *pro*_{expl/*i} A-**ku**-hlal-i muntu.

(42b) is compatible both with the analysis where expletive *pro* is introduced in its surface position and with the analysis where expletive *pro* originates from within a big DP.

4.6 Impersonal passive

- (44) *Ku-ya-dans-w-a.*
 17SM-DJ-dance-PSV-PERF
 ‘There is dancing. Es wird getanzt.’

- The theta roles aren’t unsaturated in the way that would have been a problem in with situational subjects (as they were in (21) and (22)).
- Unlikely candidate for a big DP analysis. Where’s the big DP out of which *pro* is extracted? This means that if we admit the big DP analysis for another construction, we still have cases left over where the expletive is inserted directly.

4.7 Subject of *-kho(na)*

- (45) Q: *Ku-khona imali eningi yini e-lahlekile?*
 17SM-be.present 9money 9much Q REL:9SM-lost:DJ
 ‘Is there a lot of money lost?’
- A: *Yebo, i-khona.*
 yes 9SM-be.present
 ‘Yes, there is.’

- It seems that the subject and the predicate can’t both be locative.
- This can’t be predicate raising because *kho(na)* is the predicate.
- *Ku-* is no more locative in an existential construction than in a verbal clause. Given this identical behaviour with respect to raising, they should receive the same analysis.

- (46) a. i. *Ku-fik-e izingane.*
 ii. *Izingane zifikile t_i .*
 ‘Children arrived.’
- b. i. *Ku-khona imali.*
 ii. *Imali_i ikhona t_i .*
 ‘There is money.’

4.8 Subject of *-na*

Na can mean ‘and’ or ‘with’. *-Na* can also be used to express ‘have’:

- (47) *Umfana u-na-marandi ayikhulu.*
 1boy 1SM-with-6rand 6hundred
 ‘The boy has a hundred rand.’

With class 17 subject agreement, *-na* expresses ‘there is’:

- (48) *Ku-na-marandi ayikhulu.*
 17SM-with-6rand 6hundred
 ‘There are a hundred rand.’

Note the switch between strategies of existential predication:

- (49) Q: Ku-**ne**-mali eningi yini e-lahlekile?
 17SM-with-9money 9much Q REL:9SM-lost
 ‘Is there a lot of money lost?’
- A1: * Yebo, ku-**na**-(yo.)
 yes 17SM-with-9PRON
- A2: Yebo, i-**khona**.
 yes 9SM-be.present
 ‘Yes, there is.’

Why should (49A1) be ungrammatical?

- Definiteness effect? Then why is there no definiteness effect with:

- (50) **Ku**-fik-e uSipho.
 17SM-arrive-PERF 1Sipho
 ‘Sipho’s arrived.’

- Why not **ina(yo)*? Is this a case problem?

- (51) * *pro*_{[9]i} i-na-yo *t_i*
 9SM-with-9PRON

(49A2) shows that there is nothing intrinsically wrong with raising the indefinite in this context. If *pro* here is an expletive, we expect a subject raising alternation.

- Another problem for an expletive *pro* analysis here is that we know from other uses of *na* that it can have athetic subject (a possessor). This suggests that the *pro* subject here is a situational subject as discussed in section (4.1). But this analysis, in turn, poses problems if we want to reconcile it with languages like Swahili (*kuna*) and French (*il y a*).
- Could the *pro* subject possibly be predicate raising? *-Na* is not a default like English *be*. This makes this construction an problematic for a predicate raising analysis, because *-na* appears to constitute part of the predicate.

5 Conclusion

- Outside the question of the class 17 subject marker, class 17 has a few clear locative uses and a few clear non-locative uses.
- Class 17 as a subject agreement has different sources, not amenable to a uniform analysis:
 - What the class 17 subject marker agrees with is sometimes referential and sometimes not, whether or not the element controlling agreement is covert or overt.

- Sometimes the subject marker clearly agrees with *pro*, while sometimes it agrees with something overt. In yet other cases (conjoined subjects), it is not clear with a *pro* intervenes between the lexical ‘subject’ and the subject marker.
- Where *pro* is clearly expletive, some cases can be analysed in terms of subextraction of that *pro* from a Big DP, while in other cases that it not plausible.
- In the case of *-na*, it is not clear whether the *pro* subject is expletive or situational.

References

- Buell, L. C. (2007). Semantic and formal locatives: implications for the Bantu locative inversion typology. *SOAS Working Papers in Linguistics* 15, 105–120.
- Buell, L. C. (2008a). The Bantu languages. To appear in *Walter de Gruyter’s Handbook on International Syntactic Research*.
- Buell, L. C. (2008b). Predication types and predicate-internal arguments in Zulu. Unpublished manuscript.
- Dierks, M. (2008). Null expletives and agreement in bukusu locative inversion. Unpublished manuscript.
- Marten, L. (2009). Syntactic restructuring of the locative system in siswati. Bantu 3 conference talk handout.
- Moro, A. (1997). *The Raising of Predicates*, Volume 80 of *Cambridge Studies in Linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nyembezi, C. L. S. (1970). *Learn More Zulu*. Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter.