

## *Making use of the D-layer in Dholuo*

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Since the DP-hypothesis was introduced in the syntactic research literature (see Abney 1987), the status of article-less languages with respect to this hypothesis has been largely debated (Universal DP - Progovac 1998, Basic 2004, Simpson 2005, among others; NP/DP divide - Baker 2003, Bošković 2005, Talić 2015, among others). Bošković (2008a) observes that there are fundamental syntactic and semantic differences between languages that have a definite article and those that do not. Based on these observations, he has established a parameter that suggests that some languages make use of the D-layer while others do not. Furthermore, Bošković (2010, 2016) suggests that the trigger for acquiring the NP/DP distinction is the overt definite article.

Dholuo (Luo) is a Nilo-Saharan language spoken by over 4 million people of Kenya and Tanzania. A majority of the data for this paper comes from interviews with a consultant who speaks a variety of Dholuo from Siaya County in southwest Kenya.<sup>1</sup>

Dholuo is an article-less language, as is demonstrated in (1) where the bare NP, *mpira* ‘ball’ is used for both the definite and indefinite interpretation.

- (1) Auma n-o-gwejo n-a **mpira** to n-a-gwejo **mpira** ka adwuoko-n-e-go  
Auma PST-PRF-kick to-1SG **ball** and PST-1SG-kick **ball** as return-to-3SG-3SG  
‘Auma kicked **a ball** to me and I kicked **the ball** back.’

According to Bošković’s (2008a) Negative-Raising (NR) generalization, NR is disallowed in article-less languages and is allowed in languages that have articles. Dholuo allows for NR, patterning like a DP language. This is evidenced by the usage of a strict clause-mate Negative Polarity Item (NPI) in embedded clauses. In (2), the strict NPI, *naka kij*, is located in an embedded that-clause, while negation is in the matrix clause. If strict NPIs require negation and long distance licensing of NPIs is not allowed, negation must start low and raise to the matrix clause.

- (2) n-**ok**-a-cano [ ni a-wuog [NPI **naka kij**]]  
PST-NEG-1SG-plan that 1SG-leave **until tomorrow**  
‘I didn’t plan that I would leave until tomorrow.’

Bošković’s (2012) Sequence of Tense (SOT) generalization predicts that article-less languages do not exhibit the SOT phenomenon and languages with articles do exhibit the SOT phenomenon. SOT is available in Dholuo, as is demonstrated in (3) where the sentence has two possible interpretations: a non-past simultaneous reading and an anteriority reading.

- (3) Omolo n-o-waco ni n-o-mor  
Omolo PST-1SG-say that PST-1SG-happy  
Non-past/simultaneous reading: Omolo said, “I am happy.”  
Anteriority reading: Omolo said, “I was happy.”

In Dholuo, the elements Dem and Num occur postnominally as demonstrated in (4) where the order of elements is Noun > Num > Dem.

- (4) **bug-e adek-go** gin ei sanduk  
**book-PL three-those** are in box  
‘Those three books are in the box’

Following Carsten’s (1998) N-to-D movement analysis, I argue that the underlying DP structure of (4) is D > Dem > Num. Head movement of the noun occurs cyclically, moving to the left edge of the DP. This accounts

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<sup>1</sup> The data presented in this paper was collected throughout a semester-long course as well as multiple independent interview sessions (during and after the course). Many thanks to our Dholuo speaker and consultant, Elsie Oyoo, for her contributions to this work.

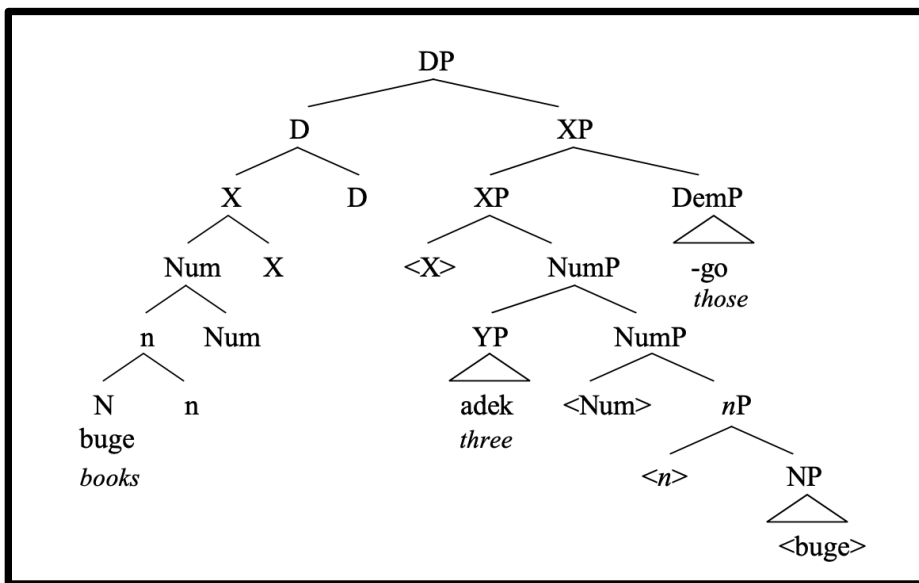
for the surface-level ordering of N, Dem, Num (as in Figure 1). The high placement of N in the nominal domain suggests that there must be functional structure above the NP, for N to move to it. I suggest that the topmost functional layer is DP, and that the D-layer is being used in *uo*. This explains why Dholuo patterns like languages with a definite article (i.e. the NR and SOT generalizations). For this reason, I further posit that the ordering of the elements Dem, Num, A; much like the definite article; may serve as a trigger for acquiring the NP/DP distinction.

The contribution of this paper is twofold. On the one hand, it contributes to well-established syntactic generalizations regarding the nominal phrase. On the other hand, it proposes a syntactic account for the structure of nominal phrases in Dholuo, which has been largely unexplored in the literature.

### Images

**Figure 1**

*N-to-D Movement Analysis for Dholuo*



*Note: The demonstrative is adjoined to right edge of XP, accounting for the surface-level order. Num is an adjunct to NumP, and seems to always be adjoined to the left in Dholuo. Head movement of the noun occurs cyclically, moving to the left edge of the DP. This accounts for the surface-level ordering of N, Dem, Num in Dholuo.*

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