



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Section: *Literature, Linguistics & Criticism***Anaphora relations in Lutsotso****Hellen Odera, David Barasa & Benard Mudogo**

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Correspondence: hellenselah@gmail.com**ABSTRACT**

This paper examines anaphora relations in Lutsotso, a variety of the Oluluhya language spoken in Western Kenya. Anaphora involves words or phrases referring to entities in discourse, essential for coherence in communication. Based on data from Lutsotso conversations and texts, the study identifies and classifies anaphoric elements, focusing on reflexives and reciprocals. Reflexive constructions in Lutsotso use morphemes like -i- or -eene- to indicate that two arguments in an action refer to the same entity. The reflexive marker -i- is a prefix positioned before the verb root. Additionally, reciprocals, marked by the pronoun -an, function as anaphoric elements in the language. This study of Lutsotso anaphora enhances understanding of linguistic structures, pragmatic principles, cross-linguistic variation, and cognitive processes in language.

KEYWORDS: Anaphora, reciprocals, reflexives, Lutsotso**Nairobi Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences**

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Introduction

This paper examines anaphora interactions in Lutsotso, with a particular emphasis on personal pronouns, reflexives, and reciprocals. Lutsotso is a dialect of the Oluluhya language, which is part of the Bantu family of the Niger-Congo group (Eberhard et al., 2020). Lutsotso is spoken by the Batsotso people in who reside in Kakamega County, mainly in Butso North, Butso South, Butso East, Butso West, and Butso Central. According to the 2020 report of the Kenya National Population Census performed in 2019, the number of Lutsotso speakers in Kakamega County is estimated to be 162,822.

Fischer (2015) defines anaphora as a term commonly applied to expressions that refer back to something previously mentioned in a conversation, known as the antecedent. In contrast, the literature on binding and reflexivity in generative grammar (Chomsky, 1981) classifies anaphors more narrowly as reflexives and reciprocals. This stricter definition may seem contradictory when discussing pronominal anaphora, particularly if we define “pronominal” strictly as referring only to personal pronouns, which would appear to conflict with the broader concept of anaphora. The textual metafunction tenet of the Systemic Functional Grammar theory (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) was used as the descriptive tool in this paper. Systemic functional linguistics treats grammar as a meaning-making resource and insists on the interrelation of form and meaning.

Lutsotso sentence structure

This section discusses Lutsotso sentence structure. The subject of Lutsotso sentence structure is critical since Lutsotso is an agglutinative language with verbs that consist of more than one morpheme expressing a specific grammatical meaning (Odera & Barasa, 2021). The Lutsotso sentence takes the SVO structure, as example (1) illustrates:

(1). <i>ama-nɔɲi</i>	<i>xa-bɔtsa-ng-a</i>	<i>ɔɸu-le</i>
6-birds	SM6-eat-PROG-FV	15-millet
birds	are eating	millet
‘The birds are eating millet’		
S	V	O

The Lutsotso morphological forms of verbs like those of other Bantu languages, include agreement, tense, aspect, anaphoric affixes, and voice (Odera et.al 2021), as example (2) illustrates:

(2). <i>ɔ-la-i-singa</i>	<i>ɔ-mu-eene</i>
SM2SG-FUT-REFL-bath	OM-SG-self
‘You will bath yourself’	

Anaphoric markers like the REFL and RECP are bound to the verb (as discussed in 4.4). These affixal morphemes must appear in a specific order in accordance with the grammatical guidelines of the language; otherwise, ungrammatical verbal forms arise. The affixal anaphoric markers REFL and RECP in Lutsotso have the typical Narrow Bantu morphology (Sikuku and Safir 2011). The REFL is a morphological affix that appears to the immediate left of the verb root in the same morphological slot as an OM. The suffix *-an-* is seen in verbal extensions. Reflexive marking is established by double-marked reflexives through two different methods as example (2) illustrates above. This relates to what Safir & Sikuku (2011) refer to as “combination markers.” Here, a reflexive pronoun and an affixal marker, which is often connected to reflexive marking and attached to the verb, combine to form an argument slot. The purpose of the latter is primarily to support the anaphoric interpretation. In Lutsotso, the reflexive morpheme is *-i-* or *-eene-* which is usually added for emphasis.

Lutsotso noun classes

The REFL marker in Lutsotso, is glossed as *-i-* or *-eene* which is added for emphasis as explained further in 4.2. Table 1 illustrates how noun classes influence the prefix attached to the reflexive marker *-eene* (‘self’) as it will be discussed in section 4. Prefixes are significant syntactically because they operate as controllers for the words with which they are linked.

Table 1: Lutsotso noun classes

Class	Nominal Prefix	Reflexive	Example	Gloss
1	<i>omu-</i>	<i>OM-i</i> <i>omueene</i>	<i>omuxana ja-i-lisinJia</i> <i>omuxana alitsanga omueene</i>	the girl is eating by herself
2	<i>aβa-</i>	<i>OM- e</i> <i>aβeene</i>	<i>aβaxana βa-i-lisinJia</i> <i>aβaxana βalitsanga aβeene</i>	girls are eating by themselves
3	<i>omu-</i>	<i>okweene</i>	<i>omusa:la kukwire okweene</i>	a tree has fallen by itself
4	<i>emi-</i>	<i>echieene</i>	<i>emisa:la chikwire echieene</i>	trees have fallen by themselves
5	<i>li-</i>	<i>elieene</i>	<i>linɔɔni liβotsanga βbule elieene</i>	a bird is eating millet by itself
6	<i>ama-</i>	<i>akaeene</i>	<i>amaɔɔni xabotsanga βbule akaeene</i>	the birds are eating millet by themselves
7	<i>eβi-</i>	<i>eβieene</i>	<i>eβifumβi βifunife eβieene</i>	a chair broke by itself
8	<i>eβi-</i>	<i>βi-</i>	<i>eβifumβi βifunife</i>	the chairs broke by themselves
9	<i>I(n)</i>	<i>ejieene</i>	<i>ij'ombe jitsanga ejieene</i>	a cow is coming by itself
10	<i>tsi-</i>	<i>etsieene</i>	<i>tsinj'ombe tsitsanga etsieene</i>	cows are coming by themselves
11	<i>olu-</i>	<i>olweene</i>	<i>olusa:la lufunife olweene</i>	the stick broke by itself
12	<i>tsi-</i>	<i>etsieene</i>	<i>tsisa:la tsifunife etsieene</i>	sticks are broken
13	<i>axa-</i>	<i>axeene</i>	<i>axa:na xaliranga axeene</i>	a tiny baby was crying itself
14	<i>oru-</i>	<i>orueene</i>	<i>oruana ruliranga orueene</i>	tiny babies were crying by themselves
15	<i>βbu-</i>	<i>ββeene</i>	<i>βbusuma βujire ββweene</i>	ugali is ready itself
16	<i>oxu-</i>	<i>oxweene</i>	<i>oxulima xuwere oxweene</i>	digging is over itself
17	<i>ha-</i>	<i>OM-ka</i>	<i>hangɔ he-ka-siye</i>	the home made itself
18	<i>mu-</i>	<i>mueene</i>	<i>Munzu mwirime mueene</i>	the house has darkened itself
19	<i>xu-</i>	<i>oxeene</i>	<i>xunzu xulaβire oxeene</i>	on house it's bright by itself
20	<i>oku-</i>	<i>okweene</i>	<i>okundu kulitsanga okweene</i>	very big person is eating by himself
21	<i>emi</i>	<i>echieene</i>	<i>emindu chilitsanga echieene</i>	very big people are eating by themselves

Source: Modified from Odera and Osore (2023)

Whereas a majority of Bantu languages classify each noun (or noun stem) into one of 15-18 noun classes (Marten 2021), the Lutsotso language has 21 classes (Odera and Osore 2023). Noun classes are very important in the Lutsotso grammatical system. Each noun class has a set of prefixes that indicate grammatical agreement between the noun and its modifiers. In anaphoric agreement, the NP and verb agree in the same manner that a pronoun agrees with a preceding NP, (Marten 2000). Example (3) below illustrates how this occurs in Lutsotso.

- (3). *omu-xana a-lits-a-nga omu-eene*
 1-girl SM1PRS-eat-FV-IPFV OM-SG-self
 'The girl is eating herself'

In example (3), the noun *omu-xana* 'girl' agrees with the class 1 SM *a-* which is attached to the verb. The prefix *omu-* which is attached on the reflexive pronoun marker *eene-* ('self') also depends on the noun class of the subject. In this case then *omu-* is a class 1 marker. Since the statement 'The girl is eating herself' looks strange or incomprehensible if read literally, the pragmatic interpretation of the sentence includes determining the intended meaning based on context,

cultural norms, and general usage. It could mean that the girl is performing the action of eating by herself, that no one is feeding her. Or in Lutsotso language it could be a metaphorical statement describing a situation where the girl is overwhelmed with guilt, self-criticism, or internal conflict, leading to the interpretation that she is metaphorically “eating herself up” emotionally. More context regarding the circumstances or the sentence’s intended meaning would be beneficial in determining the most correct pragmatic interpretation.

- (4). *Li-ḡḡni li-βōts-a-nga ɔβule e-li-eene*
 5-bird SM5-eat-FV-IPFV millet OM-SG-self
 ‘The bird was eating millet itself’

Accordingly, in example (4), *eli-* is attached to the reflexive pronoun marker *eene* and therefore agrees with the SM *li-* and noun *Li-ḡḡni*. In this regard then, the class of a noun determines the verbal morphology that signals grammatical agreement between the verb and the subject NP and also between the subject and the reflexive stem. Class prefixes control and influence the words with which they are linked as Table 1 illustrates above using reflexives.

The Lutsotso pronoun

Lutsotso pronouns can appear as noun phrase head nouns, substituting full noun phrases. There is no gender distinction in Lutsotso pronouns. In the example below, *a-* might imply either *he* or *she* in English.

- (5). *A-la-li-a*
 SM1-TNS-eat-FV
 ‘He/she will eat’

In (5) the subject marker *a-* might refer to a female or male referent. Lutsotso pronouns maybe divided into distinct categories, such as personal, reflexives, relative, reciprocal, demonstrative and possessive. This paper will only look at personal pronouns, reflexives and reciprocals as anaphoric elements.

Personal pronouns as anaphors

Pronouns are frequently employed anaphorically to refer back to a previously mentioned noun or phrase in a sentence or text (Comrie, 2014). According to Asudeh (2008), several African languages utilise specific kinds of pronouns to refer to an antecedent. Personal pronouns in Lutsotso are as follows:

	Singular forms			Plural forms		
The pronoun	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
	esie	ewe	je/ja/mu	efwe	enjwe	βo
	(I, me)(you)		(he/she, him/her)	(we, us) (you)		(they, them)

The data on the use of pronouns as anaphors is presented below:

- (6). *Lisa a-mapire Tara ja-mu-janza*
 Lisa SM1-knows Tara SM1-OM1-love
 Lisa knows Tara she her loves
 ‘Lisa knows that Tara loves her’

In example 6, the subject marker *a-* is used for the subject of the main clause. It indicates that the subject (Lisa) is class 1 (human singular). *Ja-* subject marker is used for the subject of the embedded clause. It also indicates that the subject (Tara) is class 1 (human singular). The difference lies in their roles within the sentence structure. The *a-* marker indicates the subject of the main clause, while the *ja-* marker indicates the subject of the embedded clause. The pronominal object marker *-mu* is the anaphor, and the name Lisa is the antecedent, assuming that *-mu* ‘her’ refers to Lisa. Both terms refer to the same person. However, the relationship between both expressions is not equal since the reference of the pronoun is dependent on the reference of its antecedent, whereas the reference of the antecedent is established solely by

its meaning. The term “coreference” is frequently used to denote this referential link between anaphor and antecedent (Chomsky, 2001:96).

- (7). *Ja-lola li-pusi mana li-rux-a mu-nzu ewa li-a i-jeni*
 SM1-saw 5-cat then 5-ran-FV 18-house where 5-it 5-ate 9-fish
 ‘He/she saw the cat and then it ran into the house where it ate the fish’

The sentence begins with *ja-lola*, which translates to ‘he/she saw’. Here, the subject marker *ja-* indicates that the subject is either ‘he’ or ‘she,’ classified under noun class 1. The next noun, *li-pusi*, refers to “the cat” and is marked with the prefix *li-* indicating it belongs to noun class 5. When the sentence continues with *mana li-rux-a* ‘then it ran’, the prefix *li-* is again used, maintaining the noun class 5 concord with *li-pusi*. This *li-* functions as an anaphor, referring back to the antecedent *li-pusi*. Similarly, later in the sentence, *li-a* ‘it ate’ uses the same prefix ‘*li-*,’ maintaining the reference to ‘*li-pusi*’ (the cat) established earlier. The consistency of the noun class prefix ensures that the reader understands that the subject performing the actions of running and eating is the same cat mentioned at the beginning.

Finally, ‘*i-jeni*’ ‘the fish’ includes the prefix *i-*, indicating it belongs to noun class 9. This prefix differentiates it from the subject, clarifying the object being acted upon by the cat.

Pragmatically, the use of the pronoun ‘*li-*’ to allude to ‘*li-pusi*’ (the cat) exemplifies anaphoric reference, which is a crucial component of discourse cohesiveness. The discourse flow is kept clear and seamless by employing ‘*li-*’ in place of ‘*li-pusi*,’ which would have been redundant. The anaphoric use of ‘*li-*’ makes it clear that the subject of ‘ran’ and ‘ate’ is the same as the previously mentioned ‘cat’. Without this anaphoric reference, the sentence would be less coherent and more repetitive.

The reader or listener can readily comprehend that the cat is the one performing the activities of running and eating thanks to the context that the antecedent ‘*li-pusi*’ provides. The statement is made clear and understandable by the use of anaphoric pronouns. Essentially, this sentence’s anaphoric use of *li-* demonstrates how pronouns work to establish a coherent discourse by effectively connecting actions to their objects. The constant application of noun class markers promotes both grammatical agreement and sentence clarity, demonstrating the successful fusion of pragmatic and morphosyntactic components in Lutsotso constructions.

- (8). *ɔmu-sa:tsa ja-langa ɔmu-xasi we na-mu-βolera mβu ɔmu-a:na waβɔ nɔ-mu-lwale*
 1-man SM1-called 1-wife his and-OM1SG-told that 1-child their is-OM1SG-sick
 ‘The man called his wife and told her their child was sick.’

The sentence begins with *ɔmu-sa:tsa* ‘man’, which is the subject. The verb *ja-langa* ‘called’ follows, where the subject marker (SM1) agrees with the noun class 1 subject *ɔmu-sa:tsa*. The object of this clause is *ɔmu-xasi* ‘wife’, which is further specified by the possessive pronoun ‘*we*’ (his), indicating possession by the subject *ɔmu-sa:tsa*. The sentence then continues with *na-mu-βolera* (and-OM1SG-told), a verb complex that includes the conjunction *na* ‘and’ and the verb *βolera* ‘told’ with an object marker (OM1SG). This object marker refers back to *ɔmu-xasi* ‘wife’, ensuring agreement with the noun class 1 object.

Next, the conjunction *mβu* ‘that’ introduces reported speech. The subject of the reported speech clause is *ɔmu-a:na* (1-child). The possessive pronoun *waβɔ* ‘their’ refers to both the subject *ɔmu-sa:tsa* ‘man’ and the object *ɔmu-xasi* ‘wife’, indicating that the child belongs to both of them.

Finally, the verb complex *nɔ-mu-lwale* (is-OM1SG-sick) includes the copula *no* ‘is’ and the verb *lwale* ‘sick’ with an object marker (OM1SG) that refers back to *ɔmu-a:na* (1-child).

Practically speaking, the pronouns used in this statement make the roles and connections of the parties involved clear. The antecedent *ɔmu-sa:tsa* (1-man) is used before the possessive pronoun *we* ‘his’, showing possession and connecting the woman to the man. Under *na-mu-βolera* (and-OM1SG-told), the object marker *-mu-* (OM1SG) relates to *ɔmu-xasi* (1-wife), indicating that she is the one receiving the information. The pragmatic link between the kid and the father and wife is indicated by the possessive pronoun *waβɔ* ‘their’, signifying joint possession. In *no-mu-lwale* (is-OM1SG-sick), the object marker *-mu-* (OM1SG) ultimately refers back to *ɔmu-a:na* (1-child), suggesting that the child is the one who is ill.

- (9). *βo-mβefela omu-sjani waβo i-nzu na-xusiriamu aβa-ana βe*
 SM2-built 1-son their 9-house SM1-raised 2-children his
 They built a big house for their son and he raised his children their

The sentence begins with *βo-mβefela*, where *βo* serves as the subject marker for Class 2, indicating ‘they.’ This subject is implicitly understood to be a group of people, possibly parents or family members, who are performing the action of building. The possessive marker *waβo* follows, meaning ‘their,’ which refers back to this group, indicating that the house being built is for their son.

Next, we have phrase the *na-xusiriamu* ‘he raised’, where *na* is the subject marker for Class 1, indicating ‘he.’ This shifts the focus to the son, who is the antecedent introduced earlier as *omu-sjani*. The sentence then describes that he (the son) raised his children, using *aβa-ana* to indicate ‘his children’. Here, *aβa* serves as a class marker for Class 2, indicating plurality and human reference. This possessive anaphor links back to the son, emphasizing his role as a parent. The final pronoun *βe*, meaning ‘their,’ can be slightly ambiguous without context. However, it pragmatically refers to the son and his family, maintaining the link to the previously mentioned entities. The entire structure of the sentence relies on these markers to maintain clarity and cohesion, ensuring that the actions and possessions are appropriately attributed to the correct individuals.

The sentence’s morphosyntactic structure depends on pronouns to denote connections and noun class agreements to establish structure. In this instance, the pronouns *βe* ‘his’ and *waβo* ‘their’ are used to connect the things and acts to their respective owners. *waβo* ‘their’ refers to the plural subject *βo* ‘they’, indicating ownership of the son. *βe* ‘his’ refers to the singular noun *omu-sjani* ‘son’, indicating ownership of the children. In the statement, *βo-mβeshela omu-sjani waβo i-nzu*: The antecedent is *βo* ‘they’, and the anaphor is *waβo* ‘their’, linking the group building the house to their son. The antecedent is *omu-sjani* ‘son’, and the anaphor is *βe* ‘his’, linking the son to his children. According to Wasike (2017), the use of subject markers and possessive pronouns in Bantu languages like Lutsotso is essential for disambiguating relationships and actions within sentences. This morphosyntactic feature allows for a clear understanding of who is performing the action and who possesses the object of the action.

The Lutsotso personal pronouns can co-occur the NP they are meant to replace. In the Example (10) below, the pronoun is co-referential with the subject NP and anaphorically provides the essential information about the subject NP. When the personal pronoun appears alongside the subject NP and is prefixed to the verb, it serves as a subject agreement marker.

- (10). a. *Tara je ja-njɔlile efitabu*
 1-Tara Pro1 SM1-found book
 ‘Tara found the book’

In example (10a), the subject NP is ‘Tara,’ and the pronoun *je* (she) co-occurs with it. The pronoun *je* is coreferential with ‘Tara’ and serves to emphasize or clarify the subject. The prefix *ja-* is a subject agreement marker indicating that the subject is class 1 and singular. Example (10a) emphasizes or clarifies the subject by using both the NP “Tara” and the pronoun *je*. This can be used in contexts where the speaker wants to ensure that the subject is clearly identified or stressed. The pronoun *je* can replace Tara as shown in (10b).

- b. *Je ja-njɔlile efitabu*
 Pro1 SM1 -found book
 ‘She found the book’

Here, the subject NP “Tara” is omitted, and only the pronoun *je* is used. This construction is typically used when the subject is already known from the context. The pronoun *je* stands in for “Tara,” and *ja-* remains as the subject agreement marker. Example (10 b) uses only the pronoun *je*, assuming that the subject is already known to the listener. This is a more

concise form and is typical in contexts where the subject has been previously mentioned or is easily inferable from the situation.

In example (10c) *ja* is prefixed to *njɔlile* ‘found’ and it functions as a morphological subject marker.

- c. *Ja-njɔlile eʃitaβu*
SM1-found book
‘She found the book.’

The personal pronoun *ja* in example (10c) is prefixed to the verb - *njɔlile* ‘found’ and it specifies that the subject has the feature (class 1, + singular). The subject in this case is optional. In this sentence, neither the subject NP “Tara” nor the pronoun *je* is explicitly stated. The subject agreement marker *ja-* on the verb *njɔlile* indicates that the subject is class 1 and singular, implying ‘she.’ This form is used when the subject is clear from the previous discourse or context and doesn’t need to be explicitly mentioned. Example (10c) just uses the subject agreement marker *ja-* on the verb to indicate subject agreement; it omits the pronoun and the NP. This style is used when the topic is redundantly mentioned because it is quite obvious from the previous discourse or context.

Reflexives as anaphors

Comrie (2014) gives the semantic definition of a reflexive as a construction where the subject and the object of the event or state regardless of their semantic roles are co-referential. That is, the subject acts upon (or relates to) itself. According to Givón (2001), reflexive pronouns are used as objects, complements and often as prepositional complements where these complements have the same reference as the subject of the clause or sentence. In other words, in reflexive constructions, two arguments in an action have identical references or relate to the same entity (Odera et.al 2025). This is an anaphoric relationship where the first participant is the same as the second. In Lutsotso, the reflexive morpheme is *-i-* or *-eene-* as illustrated in the following examples. The REFL, which is glossed as *-i-* in our examples, is a prefix that appears immediately to the left of the verb root in what appears to be the same morphological slot as an OM suggesting a syntactic parallel between reflexive and object marking constructions in Lutsotso.

- (11). *ɔmu-a:na a-i-rema*
1-child SM1-REFL-cut
Child cut himself/herself
‘The child cut himself /herself’

In example (11), *-i-* is the reflexive marker that denotes the anaphor that refers back to the antecedent *ɔmua:na* ‘child’. The example indicates that the child performed the action of cutting on himself/herself.

Morphosyntactically, the presence of the reflexive marker *-i-* in (11) signals that the subject, *ɔmua:na* (‘child’), is the agent (antecedent) of the action and also the recipient of it. This is typical of reflexive constructions, where the subject and object refer to the same entity. The reflexive marker *-i-* is prefixed to the verb root *rema* (‘cut’), indicating that the child is both the doer and the undergoer of the action, cutting themselves.

Pragmatically, this construction reflects the focus on self-action and self-involvement. It implies that the child performed the action intentionally or accidentally on themselves, suggesting agency and control over the action. The use of the reflexive marker *-i-* emphasizes the relationship between the subject and the action, highlighting the reflexivity of the event.

- (12). *Ndi-i-lum-il-e*
1SG-REFL-bite-NPST-FV
‘I have bitten myself.’

In example (12), *-i-* is the reflexive marker and anaphorically implies that the speaker performed the action of biting *-imile* on himself/herself.

- (13). *Lipu:si li-i-xomβ-a-nga* (e-li-eene)
 5-cat SM5-REF-lick-FV-IPFV (OM-SG-self)
 cat is self licking
 ‘The cat is licking itself’

In example (13) the anaphor is marker by *-i* and *-eene* has been added for emphasis. These anaphors are referring back to the antecedent *lipu:si* ‘cat’. *-elieene* is emphasizing that not any other thing or person licked *lipu:si* ‘cat’, but itself.

- (14). *ola-i-singa* (o-mu-eene)
 SM2SG-REFL-bath (OM-SG-self)
 ‘You will bath (yourself)’

In example (14), *-i* is the reflexive marker referring back to the antecedent *ola* ‘you’. *omweene* which is optional has been added for emphasis, stressing that the act of bathing *-singa* will be performed by the person being spoken to themselves. Pragmatically, the addition of ‘*omweene*’ emphasises the action performed by the subject. It emphasises the sense that the subject is actually bathing oneself. This could be used to communicate a variety of meanings depending on the situation, such as demand, emphasis, or clarification. The use of reflexive markers and optional intensifiers is common in many languages to convey self-action and emphasis (Sikuku, 2013).

Reciprocals as anaphors

This refers to constructions in which two or more participants act upon each other. As the name depicts, participants involved reciprocate each other in the action expressed by the verb. Sikuku (2011) observes that in Bantu languages, the reciprocal appears to be involved in morpho-lexical operation of verb derivation. The reciprocal derives a one place predicate from a two-place predicate or in general reduces by one the array of arguments of the non-reciprocalized predicate.

Different languages indicate reflexive and reciprocal relations in different ways; some markings may also be assigned to other functions (Sikuku 2013). Common REFL/RECP marking in Bantu includes a variety of nominal and verbal strategies (Marlo 2015, Heine 2000). Typically, nouns or pronouns are employed separately or in alongside verbal affixes to form nominal strategies. These are what I will refer to this study as (pro)nominals that are reflexive and reciprocal. Affixes, also known as clitics, are verbal strategies that encode reflexivity and reciprocity. Lutsotso uses the verbal affixes strategy to manifest reciprocity. In Lutsotso, the reciprocal marker is *-an-*. The reciprocal marker is formed by inserting *-an-* between the final consonant and the next vowel or vowels in the simple stem of the verb, as demonstrated in the following examples:

- (15). a. *neka*
 ‘abuse’
 b. *nek-an-a*
 abuse-RECP-FV
 ‘abuse each other’

In example (15), *nekana* ‘abuse each other’, the reciprocal marker *-an-* ‘each other’ refers back to the plural subject (implied or stated) and shows that the action of abuse is directed mutually between the individuals within that group. It signifies that multiple people are engaging in the action of abusing one another.

In the given example, *nekana*, which translates to ‘abuse each other,’ we see the morphosyntactic structure indicating reciprocal action. The verb *neka* meaning ‘abuse’ is marked with the reciprocal suffix *-an-* and the finite verb marker *-a*. This morphological structure *nek-an-a* signifies that the action of abuse is reciprocal, indicating that multiple agents are involved in the action, and each agent is both subject and object of the action simultaneously.

Morphosyntactically, the reciprocal marker *-an* attaches to the verb stem *nek-* to denote that the action is directed back onto the subjects performing it (Odera et al. 2025). This suffix is commonly used in Bantu languages (Sikuku 2013) to indicate mutual action between two or more participants. By adding the reciprocal marker, the sentence explicitly

conveys that the abuse is not unidirectional but rather mutual, with each participant acting as both an agent and a recipient of the action.

- (16). *Xup-a xup-an-a*
 beat-FVbeat-RECP-FV
 ‘beat’ ‘beat each other’

In example 16, *xupana* ‘beat each other’ is similar to the first example, *-an* ‘each other’ here refers back to the plural subject and indicates a mutual action of beating between multiple individuals. They are both the subject and object of the action. In this morphosyntactic analysis, the verb forms *xup-a* and *xup-an-a* are examined. The root verb *xup* signifies ‘to beat,’ with the suffix *-a* as the final vowel in the verb morphology. In the second form, the suffix *-an* signifies reciprocal morphology, suggesting that the action is reciprocal, or mutual (*xup-an-a*). Finally, the second *-a* suffix reaffirms the finite aspect, indicating future tense once more. Therefore, *xup-an-a* can be deconstructed morphologically as *xup* (‘beat’) plus *-a* (final vowel) plus *-an* (reciprocal) plus *-a* (future tense), resulting in the meaning ‘to beat each other’.

From a pragmatic standpoint, the inclusion of the reciprocal marker *-an* in *xup-an-a* emphasises the mutual nature of the action, meaning that the beating is reciprocated by numerous individuals. This emphasises the notion of engagement and shared involvement in the activity, in which each participant is both the subject and the object of the beating. This structure creates a sense of synchronicity in the activity, emphasising the mutual nature of the beating process.

In reference to morphosyntactic analysis, according to Duranti (1997), reciprocal markers like *-an* often indicate mutual or reciprocal actions between two or more participants in many languages. Furthermore, Aikhenvald (2004) discusses the use of reciprocal constructions in various languages, highlighting their role in expressing mutual actions between participants. Therefore, the use of the reciprocal marker *-an* in *xupana* ‘beat each other’ aligns with cross-linguistic patterns observed in reciprocal constructions.

In terms of pragmatic analysis, Levinson (1987) discusses the pragmatic implications of reciprocal constructions, emphasizing their role in highlighting mutual involvement and shared participation in actions.

- (17). *fesia fes-an-i-a*
 greet greet-RECP-APPL-FV
 ‘greet’ ‘greet.each other’

In example (17), *fesania* ‘greet each other’, the reciprocal marker *-an-* ‘each other’ refers to the plural subject, expressing the mutual action of greeting. It implies that multiple individuals are exchanging greetings with one another. In example (17), the phrase *fesania* consists of four morphemes: *fes* which means ‘greet’ and *-an-i-a* which is composed of *-an-*, *-i* and *-a*. Morphosyntactically, *-an-* serves as a reciprocal marker indicating mutual action among the participants involved, while *-i* comes in as an applicative and *-a* functions as the final vowel.

Pragmatically, *fesania* conveys the idea of mutual greetings among multiple individuals. The reciprocal marker *-an* specifies that the action of greeting is directed towards each other within the group. This implies a sense of social interaction and cohesion among the participants, as they engage in a shared ritual of exchanging greetings. This analysis aligns with the principles of reciprocal marking in linguistics, where reciprocal constructions indicate actions performed by multiple participants towards each other. According to Haspelmath (2007), reciprocal constructions are a common feature across languages, often marked by specific morphological elements like *-an* in this case.

Conclusion

The study has established that anaphoric element are strategically used by speakers to convey their desired meaning while maintaining communication coherence. Instead of only grammatical rules, the dynamic interaction of context, pragmatics, and shared knowledge has a significant impact on the distribution of anaphoric items in conversation. Further, anaphora in Lutsotso can be marked by a combination of morphemes or free lexical items. Also, in anaphoric agreement, the NP and verb agree in the same manner that a pronoun agrees with a preceding NP.

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