| **RESEARCH ARTICLE**

Embosi Semantic Roles: The Case of Direct and Indirect Objects

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| **ABSTRACT**

This analysis deals with the semantic roles of direct and indirect objects in Embosi, a Bantu language spoken in the northern part of the Republic of Congo. Downing and Locke's (2006) integrated approach guides the work. The investigation, within Embosi grammar, reveals that direct objects attest the key thematic roles of affected, instrument, patient, phenomenon, and theme, while indirect objects systematically testify the roles of recipient and beneficiary. The work also proves the semantic ambiguity in direct objects within the roles of affected, patient and theme. The study looks at how syntax and semantics interact to show the double object construction using ditransitive verbs and the preposition object construction by moving the indirect object to the prepositional object. The analysis also proves the similarities between Embosi and Lingala languages within semantic roles. Finally, the work demonstrates how the context-dependent aspect plays a crucial role in interpreting and resolving the function of direct and indirect objects in Embosi.

1. Introduction

Guthrie (1948) classifies Embosi, a Bantu language with five dialects, as a C25 language. This work is based on the Embosi strictly speaking dialect. The paper is motivated by the documentation of Embosi, which has no written form, and it aims at exploring the semantic roles related to direct and indirect objects in that language. In the study of linguistics, the concept of semantic roles is fundamental to understanding how language constructs and conveys meaning. Semantic roles, also known as thematic roles, describe the relationship between a verb and its arguments, specifically the subject and the direct and indirect objects of the sentence.

Within Embosi grammar, the distinction between direct and indirect objects holds a particular significance, as it encompasses both the syntactic organisation and the semantic meaning. This study addresses three central research questions: 1) What are the key semantic roles fulfilled by direct and indirect objects in Embosi grammar? 2) How do these semantic roles syntactically and semantically interact in Embosi? 3) How does context influence the interpretation of direct and indirect objects functions in Embosi? After providing the theoretical background, this paper explores the semantic roles associated with the direct and indirect objects in Embosi, their syntactic and semantic interaction, a cross-linguistic perspective with the Lingala language, and the impact of pragmatic features in the semantic roles interpretation. For the purposes of this analysis, the key informants and participant observation were crucial for data collection.

2. Background Information

This section briefly presents the Embosi language. It also provides an overview of semantic roles, including the definitions of direct and indirect objects and tackles the approach chosen to carry out the study.

2.1 Embosi language

In his Bantu Languages classification, Guthrie (1948) identifies Embosi as the C20 language. According to him, the language has seven dialects: Mboko C21, Akwa C22, Ngaré C23, Koyo C24, Embosi strictly speaking C25, Likwala C26 and Likuba C27. Even if speakers of Embosi are nowadays scattered in all the Republic of Congo, the language is essentially spoken in the north of the country, particularly in the divisions of Cuvette and Nkéni-Alima. However, the classification of Embosi and its dialects is the subject of debates among linguists. Ndongo Ibara (2012, 2018), Ngapoula (2020), and Oba (2025) are among those who think that a new classification should be suggested (Ngapoula 2025:102).

As a matter of fact, what Guthrie qualifies by group and languages as far as Embosi is concerned, Ndongo Ibara (2018,29) proposes to call them respectively by language and dialects. In addition, Ngapoula (2020,81) suggests a new classification in which the Guthrie group C20 should have three languages: Embosi, Likwala and Likuba. The C21, C22, C23, C24, and C25 Guthrie languages are, according to him, dialects of the same language, Embosi. He justifies his argumentation by the fact that all those dialects speakers do not require interpreters to understand each other. Oba (2024,393), in his behalf, claims the existence of Tohu that has to be considered as a language rather than an Akwa dialect. He also points out the absence of that variety in Guthrie classification. However, this study is concerned with Embosi C25, more specifically with the Oléé subdialect that is spoken in the Nkéni Alima division, in the subprefectures of Abala, Ollombo and Ongogni.

2.2. The semantic roles

Semantic roles, also called thematic roles, refer to the relationships between the participants and the action or state conveyed by the verb in a sentence. According to Akanya & Gowon (2019,3), a semantic role is the basic idea or information of an encoder in conformity with the action words perform in a given context. It is the actual activity participant carried out in some real/imagined situation, apart from these linguistic encoding of those situation. This amounts to saying that semantic roles constitute the basis of sentence interpretation, they help understand events, actions and relationships encoded by syntax.

In addition, they form a prominent framework in the interpretation of various functions constituents in a sentence. As noted by Leech et al. (2001,75), semantic roles demonstrate the hierarchical and relational organisation of sentence components, contributing primarily to meaning. Thus, a fundamental comprehension of these roles enables us to grasp meaning and sentence structures. They are crucial not only for syntactic structures but also for meaning understanding.

We generally distinguish many semantic roles, among which are: agent, experiencer, force, theme, result, recipient, source, patient, goal, beneficiary or benefactive, locative, accompaniment, affected, phenomenon, and instrument. However, this work focuses only on semantic roles related to direct and indirect objects.

2.3. The direct object

Direct objects are among the main syntactic functions in a sentence or a clause. According to Downing and Locke (2006,50), after the subject and the predicator, direct object is the most central of all clause constituents. Usually realized by nominal groups or clauses, direct objects reply to the questions "What?" or "Who?" after a transitive or a ditransitive verb. They operate as the immediate target of the verb's action. Their presence highlights the sentence by clarifying the connection between the verb's action and its target within a coherent interpretative framework. The following examples illustrate direct objects:

(1a) Ondongo àbomi *mbusà*.
 Ondongo kill-ed antilope
 Ondongo killed *an antilope*.

(1b) Ibara àpè ngà *mà*.
 Ibara give-ed I water
 Ibara gave me *water*.

Indeed, mbusà *"an antilope"* in (1a) and mà *"water"* in (1b) refer to direct objects. The first is introduced by the transitive verb abomi *"killed"* and the second by the ditransitive verb àpè *"gave"*. Both direct objects reply to the questions, *what* did Ondongo kill? for (1a), and *what* did Ibara give me? for (1b). The direct object occurs immediately after the transitive verb and follows the indirect object with the ditransitive verb.

Besides, in Embosi, direct objects are realised by nominal groups which include nouns, pronouns and proper nouns, preposition phrases and non-finite clauses. Let us consider the following sentences:

(2a) Ngà idii ipè nò *mbòngò*.
     Me be-ed give you money
     I was giving you *money*.
(2b) Ngà idii ipè nò yà.
     Me be-ed give you it
     I was giving you it.

(2c) Mwánà yà bolà à nò àbèti Dimi.
     Child of sister/brother of you beat-ed Dimi
     Your nephew/niece beat Dimi

(3) Wà àdi là posà ngolà yà ibiéngi mà iburà là mbóà
    He/she be of will after of tomorrow for go back of village
    He/she wants after tomorrow to go back to the village.

(4) Bisi lédi odzémà là pósà yà obusà bànà mpéndza ko.
    We be- stay of will of leave children alone not
    We do not want to leave the children alone.

Indeed, (2a), (2b), and (2c), the direct objects are respectively realized by the noun mbòngò *"money"*, the pronoun ya *"it"* and the proper noun Dimi. In (3) however, the direct object ngolà yà ibiéngi *"after tomorrow"* answers the question: what does he/she want? It is a prepositional phrase introduced by the preposition after. In (4), the direct object ibusà bànà mpéndza "*to leave children alone*" is a non-finite clause introduced by the infinitive "to leave". Besides, when a direct object is realised by a noun phrase, it cannot be moved to an oblique object. In that perspective, Miller (2002,93) asserts that we can say that the direct NP is never preceded by a preposition. However, with ditransitive verbs, direct objects occur with indirect one.

2.4. The indirect object
An indirect object is a syntactic function which occurs only with ditransitive verbs, that is, with verbs that take two objects. Downing and Locke (2006,55) attest that it is typically realized by a nominal group, but occasionally by a wh-nominal clause. An indirect object answers the question "To whom?" when the action is directed to or "For whom?" when the action is performed for. They enrich sentences by introducing additional relational dimensions to the verb's action. Let us consider the following examples:

(5a) Ikamà àtindà *no* àko.
     Ikama send future you bananas
     Ikama will send *you* bananas.

(5b) Téi yà bisi àbombi *Oko* swé yà obisi.
      Father of we keep-ed their fish of fresh
      Our father kept *Oko* a fresh water fish.

(5c) Adua àpè *mbuàndé* mà
     Adua give-ed dog water
     Adua gave *the dog* water.

In fact, the indirect object no, *"you"* in (5a), is immediately used after the predicator àtindà *"will send",* and answers the question "to whom" because the action of sending bananas is *directed to* no *"you"*. However, in (5b), the action of keeping a freshwater fish is not directed to Oko, the indirect object, but rather the action is *performed for* him. In 5c, the indirect object is mbuàndé *"the dog"* to which the action of giving water is directed.

As far as the realisation of indirect objects are concerned, they are realized by nominal groups, that is, pronouns (5a), proper nouns (5b) and by nouns (5c). Let us tackle the approach, which enables us to carry out this study.

2.5. Theoretical Approach
The study of semantic roles is rooted in linguistic traditions such as Fillmore's Case Grammar and Jackendoff's conceptual semantics. Downing and Locke (2006) advocate for an integrated approach combining syntactic structures and semantic interpretations. Their perspective highlights the interplay between the grammatical form and the conveyed meaning, emphasizing the integration of syntax and semantics. They argue that understanding sentence structure is incomplete without considering how

meaning is shaped. For instance, they link semantic roles like patient, recipient, and beneficiary directly to sentence architecture. This theoretical grounding informs the detailed analysis in subsequent sections.

3. Data analysis and discussion
3.1. Direct object: semantic roles and functions
The examination of the semantic role of direct objects is not an easy task. Börjas & Burridge (2010,88) assert that the semantic role of direct objects is more complex; they have traditionally been linked to the noun phrase which is the most affected by the action of the verb. This means that the thematic roles of direct objects depend on the relationship between the noun phrase and the action of the predicator. The analysis tackles five semantic roles related to direct objects, which are: affected, instrument, patient, phenomenon, and theme.

3.1.1. Semantic role of affected
The affected semantic role refers to an entity in a sentence that is influenced by the verb action or is in some way impacted by an action, event, or process. The affected role emphasises the impact or result of the verb's action. Let us consider the following example:

(6a) Obàà àbondzi *ndai yà bini*.
    Obàà destroy-ed house of you
    Obàà destroyed *your house*.

(6b) Elenga àdii atsindàà *lendàà*
    Elenga was push-prog bike
    Elenga was pushing *the bicycle*.

Indeed, ndai ya bini *"your house"* in (6a) is the direct object having the semantic role of affected because it undergoes a complete transformation, that is, the destruction which is the consequence of the verb ibodzà *"to destroy"*. However, the direct object lendàà *"bicycle"*, in (6b) is also affected. It is influenced or impacted by the verb action of pushing even if it does not change its state. Thus, the semantic role of affected is then important in the identification of the relationships of constituents within a syntactic structure. Let us examine, in the following lines, the thematic role of instrument.

3.1.2. Semantic role of instrument
The semantic role of instrument introduces the means by which an action is performed. Yule (2010,116) claims that if an agent uses another entity in order to perform an action, that other entity fills the role of instrument. It often plays a dual function of both specifying the means and enhancing the descriptive richness of a sentence. It refers to the entity used by the agent to perform the verb action. Let us analyse the following sentence:

(7a) Ngóò yà bà àkoßi *bunu* mà ibomà là ndzò
    Mother of they take-ed machete of kill of snake
    Their mother took *the machete* to kill the snake.

(7b) Ngakoso àkiéni mwéré mo *dzuémbé*
    Ngakoso cut-ed tree with ax
    Ngakoso cut the tree with *the ax*.

In fact, the direct object bunu *"machete"*, in (7a), plays the semantic role of instrument. It represents a tool or a means through which the action of killing the snake will be carried out. This thematic role enhances the precision of the sentence's meaning by highlighting the agent's involvement in the action of killing the snake. However, in some sentences, as in (7b), the instrument often occurs with the prepositional object dzuémbé *"the ax"* introduced by prepositions mo *"with"*; but since this work focuses on direct objects, we will not tackle this aspect. In the lines that follow, let us look at the theme thematic role.

3.1.3. Semantic role of patient
The concept of patient makes reference to a semantic role which expresses the entity that is affected by an action or event. The patient is generally the syntactic function that undergoes a change of state or is impacted by the verb action. Patient particularity is that the verb's action necessarily changes the state. The following examples highlight this argumentation.

(8a) Mwánà yà nò àbondzi sààni là ngà.
    Child of you break-ed plate of me

Your child broke my plate.

(8b) Ondzéà àlondi kásà là bolà à bà.
Ondzéà repair-ed basket of sister of them
Ondzéà repaired the basket of their sister.

In fact, the direct object sààni là ngà "*my plate*" in (8a) is a patient. It has been affected by the action of breaking; it changes its state from the normal state to the broken one. Similarly, in (8b), the direct object kásà *"the basket"* plays the semantic role of patient since it undergoes the verb action of repairing. It has changed the state from the non-repaired state to the repaired one. So, understanding the semantic role of the patient helps in analysing sentence structure and meaning in linguistics. Let us consider the thematic role of phenomenon in the lines that follow.

3.1.4. Phenomenon

A phenomenon represents entities that trigger an experience or perception without intentionality. While less discussed in traditional syntax-semantics studies, it plays a unique role in sentences involving sensory or emotional verbs. Indeed, the semantic role of phenomenon refers to an entity that is perceived or experienced, often in relation to a sensory experience or an event. It typically represents something that is observed or felt, such as a sound, sight, or event, and is often linked to verbs that describe perception or cognition. The illustrations below clarify this argumentation.

(9a) Ngà ibondà *buà* tsà ékwé yà ngà yà élomi (experience)
Me feel pain in foot of me of right
I feel *a pain* in my right foot.

(9b) Itua àdii awoà *loßo ipoo* tsà isà là iko (perception)
Itua be- ed hear-progr noise in field of cassava
Itua was hearing *a noise* in the cassava field.

(9c) Tamwàré yà bisi àténi là engusu l póà (observation)
Aunt   of we meet-ed with storm with yesterday
Our aunt met a storm yesterday

In fact, in (9a), the direct object buà *"a pain"*, is a phenomenon; it is something experienced by the subject, while in (9b), loßo ipoo *"a noise"*, is a direct object acting as a phenomenon. It is an entity which perceived by the subject. In (9c), however, the direct object engusu "*a storm*", is also a phenomenon which depicts something observed by the actor. Whenever a sentence incorporates the semantic role of a phenomenon, the subject assumes the role of an experiencer. So, in 9a, 9b, and 9c, the phenomenon represents the entity or event that is perceived, experienced, or observed, highlighting its role in the context of sensory or cognitive experiences. The semantic role of theme is examined in the following lines.

3.1.5. Theme

The theme indicates the entity that is affected or is the primary focus of the action. It differs slightly from the patient by acting as the focus or mover in a sentence without necessarily being affected. Yule (2010,115) defines it as an entity that is involved in or affected by the action; it can also be an entity that is simply being described, that is, not performing an action. The theme is also defined as the entity that is moved by the action or event denoted by the predicator. It can also be described as the object that is located or relocated in space. Let us consider the following examples:

(10a) Ibi àpè nga *ibàà*
Ibi give-ed me knife
Ibi gave me *a knife*

(10b) *Nèènè* àdi tsà ndai
Mummy is in house
Mummy is in the house

As a matter of fact, in (10a), the direct object ibàà *"a knife"* is a theme, it is the entity that is considered as the focus of the verb action. The difference it will have with patient and affected is the fact that there is no change of the state of the knife. However, the semantic role of theme can also be fulfilled by the subject as in (10b). Indeed, even if this work does not focus on semantic

roles of subjects, it is worthwhile pointing out that the subject nèènè *"mummy"* may have the same semantic role as a direct object when it consists of the entity location. This double consideration of semantic roles brings ambiguity in their understanding.

3.2. Semantic ambiguity in direct objects

The understanding of semantic roles is sometimes ambiguous. Miller (2011,203) claims that the resilience of semantic/participant roles is itself an indication that the concept has a lot of intuitive appeal for analysts. Indeed, the semantic roles of affected, patient, and theme can overlap and interact in complex ways, leading to ambiguities in interpretation. Indeed, at times, the semantic roles of the patient and the affected can overlap, causing confusion, as can the relationship between the theme and the affected. In (6a), the direct object ndai yà bini *"your house"*, and the direct object lendàà *"the bicycle"* in (6b) are qualified as affected because they both undergo the verbs' actions. We notice the change of the state in (6a) and no change of the state in (6b).

However, in (8a) and (8b), the direct objects sààni la ngà, "*my plate*", and kásà, "*the basket*", have the semantic role of "patient" because they have changed the state after having undergone the verb's actions as the affected object in (7a). As a result, there is an ambiguity between the patient objects in (8a) and (8b) and the affected object in (6a). In other words, the semantic role of patient is primarily an affected one. Similar to this, (10a) illustrates the thematic role of theme as an entity that is affected or moved by the action of the predicator.

Moreover, the semantic role of theme is depicted as an entity that is affected or moved by the verb action, as in (10a). Since that object may be affected, it also brings ambiguity with the proper semantic role of affected. Furthermore, another confusion that is observed with the theme is that it can be used for the semantic role of direct objects (10a) and is also used for the syntactic function of the subject (10b). Thus, affected is a broader semantic role which includes the patient and sometimes the theme. Otherwise, the thematic role of instrument is not direct object specific as in (7a), it can also be used with oblique objects as in (7b). Let us examine, in the following lines, the semantic roles of indirect objects.

3.3. Indirect Objects: Semantic roles and functions

In Embosi, the indirect objects are introduced by ditransitive verbs. They have two semantic roles: the recipient, which refers to the entity to which the verb action is directed; and the beneficiary, which is the entity for which the action is performed.

3.3.1. Recipient

The recipient is the entity that receives something directly as a result of an action. This role is often associated with the transfer of objects or information. The recipient is typically the one who ends up with the item after the action takes place. Let us illustrate with the following examples:

(11a) Muandinga àtindi *Buya* àbangé.
    Muandinga send-ed Buya mangoes
    Muandinga sent *Buya* mangoes.

(11b) Kàà yà ibàà àdii àtiyà *bini* isimà.
    Grandparent of man be-ed tell-progr you stories
    The grandfather was telling *you* stories.

Indeed, the indirect objects Buya in (11a) and bini *"you"* in (11b) have both the semantic role of recipient. The action of sending mangoes is directed to Buya, who directly receives them, while the action of telling stories is directed to you. The other semantic role related to indirect objects is beneficiary.

3.3.2. Beneficiary

The beneficiary, or benefactive, is the entity that benefits from an action, even if it does not sometimes receive anything directly. The beneficiary may gain an advantage or some positive outcome from the action, but they are not necessarily the direct recipient of an object. The following illustrations highlight this argumentation.

(12a) Ikia àwénà olambà *nèènè* swé yà owomii.
    Ikia be cook mum fish of smoked
    Ika is cooking *mum* a smoked fish.

(12b) Ngangia àbombi *mwàsi yà nò* bèndzi.
    Ngangia keep-ed wife of you sit
    Ngangia kept *your wife* a sit.

In fact, the indirect objects nèènè *"mum"* in (12a) and mwàsi yà nò *"your wife"* in (12b) have the semantic role of beneficiary. The action of cooking a smoked fish (12a) is performed for mum, she is the one who benefits from the verb action. In addition, the action of keeping a sit (12b) is for the benefit of the object, your wife, who is therefore the benefactive. The position of direct and indirect objects in the sentence structure may be subject of the interaction between semantics and syntax.

3.4. Semantic and syntactic interaction

The sentences made with ditransitive verbs require two objects: the direct object, which is immediately placed after the indirect object, which itself precedes the direct one. With the same type of verbs, we can also find two objects: the direct object following the predicate and the oblique object, introduced by a preposition. Accordingly, Gelderen (2010,69) asserts that indirect object can be preceded by the preposition to, in the case of the goal, and for, in the case of beneficiary. This double construction reinforces the syntactic structure and has an impact on the semantics of the whole sentence. Let us consider (11a).

(11a) Muandinga àtindi *Buya* àbangé.
Muandinga send-ed Buya mangoes
Muandinga sent *Buya* mangoes.

In this sentence, the indirect object Buya, with the recipient semantic role, follows the predicate and precedes the theme direct object àbangé *"mangoes"*. In the semantics of this sentence, the action verb emphasises the direct object; the meaning is focused on the entity that was sent to Buya. However, the prepositional object construction changes the emphasis. Let us consider the following sentence:

13 Muandinga àtindi àbangé *li* Buya.
Muandinga send-ed mangoes to Buya
Muandinga sent mangoes *to* Buya.

The introduction of the preposition to involves the shift of the object *Buya* from the indirect to the oblique object, keeping the same semantic role of recipient. However, this change in position affects the semantics of the sentence. Indeed, with the prepositional construction, the emphasis is no longer on the indirect object àbangé "mangoes, but rather on the verb action, which lays stress on *Buya,* the recipient prepositional object. The same phenomenon was observed with the introduction of the preposition *for* from (12b) to (14c); let us examine.

(12b) Ngangia àbombi mwási yà nò bèndzi.
Ngangia keep-ed wife of you sit
Ngangia kept your wife a sit.

(14) Ngangia àbombi bèndzi *mo* mwàsi yà nò.
Ngangia keep-ed sit for wife of you
Ngangia kept a sit *for* your wife.

In fact, in (12b), the verb action emphasises on the theme direct object bèndzi *"a sit"* whereas in (14), with the introduction of the preposition for, the attention is drawn to the beneficiary oblique object mwàsi yà nò *"your wife"*. Indeed, in (12b), the first question which attracts attention is: what did Ngangia keep for your wife? The answer, naturally, is the direct object *a sit*. In (14) however, the first question is: for whom did Ngangia keep a sit? Of course, for the oblique object, *your wife*.

In addition, in the case of passivisation, the direct object may change the function from the direct object in the active sentence to the subject in the passive sentence. Depending on the case, the active subject may be missing or present in a prepositional phrase. Accordingly, Newson et al. (2006,72) claim that another fact about objects is that they are arguments which may undergo certain syntactic processes and so seem to be singled out by these. For example, in a passive sentence, the subject may go missing. Let us illustrate this argumentation with the following example:

(15a) Bàré àté Adua tsà ko.
People see-ed Adua in forest
People saw Adua in the forest.

(15b) Adua àtami tsà ko.
Adua be-seen in forest

Adua was seen in the forest.

Indeed, in (15a), Adua is a direct object, having the semantic role of theme, and is immediately placed after the transitive verb *to see* in this active sentence. In (15b), however, Adua is no longer an object, but rather a subject, with the omission subject of the active sentence. So, in the passive sentence, the emphasis is put on the active object, which is now the subject. Otherwise, let us consider the direct and indirect objects as far as semantic roles are concerned in Lingala, another Bantu language also classified in group C.

3.5. A cross-linguistic perspective
In Lingala, a Bantu language mainly spoken in the Republic of Congo and the Democratic Republic of Congo, classified by Guthrie in the group C as a C36d language (Ngapoula 2025,113), semantic roles function similarly to those of the Embosi language. They help to clarify the relationships between syntactic functions based on the action or event described by the predicator. Following the Embosi examples provided above, let us consider the translation of some of them in Lingala to depict semantic roles. Indeed, Lingala attests the semantic roles of affected, instrument, patient, phenomenon and theme for direct objects and recipient and beneficiary for indirect objects. Let us consider the examples below from the translation of Embosi sentences.

(6a) Oba abondzi *ndako na bino*.
        Oba destroyed *your house*.

(7a) Mama na bango adzuaki *maseti* pona koboma nyoka.
        Their mother took *the machete* to kill the snake.

(8a) Mwana na yo abondzi *saani na nga*.
        Your child broke *my plate*.

(9a) Nga nazali koyoka *pasi* na likolo na nga ya mobali.
        I feel *a pain* in my right foot.

(10a) Ibi apesaki nga *mbeli*.
        Ibi gave me *a knife*.

(11a) Muandzinga atindaki *Buya* ba mangolo.
        Muandinga sent *Buya* mangoes.

(12a) Ikia azali kolamba *mama* bisi ya mokalu.
        Ikia is cooking *mum* a smoked fish.

As a matter of fact, in (6a), the direct object ndako na bino *"your house"* has the semantic roles of affected, since it has changed the state after the predicator's action. In (7a), the semantic role is instrument because the direct object maseti *"machete"* is the tool used to perform the verb action. In addition, the direct object saani na nga *"my plate"* in (8a) is a patient that has undergone the verb action with an obvious change of the state. In (9a), pasi *"a pain"*, is a direct object which is experienced, so it is a phenomenon. However, in (10a), the direct object mbeli *"a knife"* is a theme, it is the primary focus of the verb action.

As far as indirect objects are concerned, (11a) attests the semantic role of recipient, since the object Buya is the one the action is directed to. In (12a), the indirect object mama *"mum"* benefits from the action of cooking a smoked fish, so it is beneficiary. Thus, Lingala shares similarities with Embosi in terms of semantic roles, likely due to their shared language family. A deep analysis of Lingala semantic roles is required to probably reveal some dissimilarities between both languages concerning direct and indirect objects relationships within a syntactic structure.

3.6. The pragmatic features of Embosi semantic roles
While semantic roles focus on the relationships between syntactic functions in an event or an action, pragmatics considers how those relationships and meanings are affected by the context in which they occur. Indeed, the same semantic role can have different interpretations depending on the situation in which it is used. Effective language communication has to take into consideration both the semantic and pragmatic aspects of thematic roles. The analysis of the following illustrations highlights the context-dependent aspect of semantic roles interpretation.

(11b) Kàà yà ibàà àdii àtiyà *bini isimà*.

Grandparent of man be-ed tell-progr you stories
The grandfather was telling *you stories*.

(12a) Ikia àwénà olàmbà *nèènè swé yà owomii*.
Ikia   be   cook   mum fish of smoked
Ika is cooking *mum a smoked fish*.

(16) Kanga àlààsi *bisi ànè*.
Kanga show-ed we way
Kanga showed *us the way*.

Indeed, in (11b), we have the theme direct object isimà *"stories"* and the recipient indirect object bini "*you*". Communication consists of the speaker encoding his thought, transmitting it via language, and the hearer, who receives it, has to decode it and converts to meaning in order to understand the message. With the direct object in (11b), the speaker does not specify which stories he is referring to, he does not provide sufficient information to help the hearer identify the referred entity. Following the Grice (1975)'s Cooperative Principle, he violates the maxim of quantity, leading to implicature. In the meaning negotiation, the hearer may ask the question: Isimà bà ndéngé ndé? "Which kind of stories?". Depending on different contexts, the speaker may refer to a factual account or a real-life experience, that is, to stories of true events, about his family for instance. He may also make reference to a fictional narrative, imaginary or invented tales for the purpose of entertainment. In a different context, the speaker might also allude to deceptive narratives that conceal the truth.

As for the indirect object bini *"you"* in (11b), the understanding of the intended meaning of the referred entity is context dependent. The recipient indirect object may be passive or active according to the context of use. By telling the stories, if the objective of the speaker is to provide the hearer "you" with a piece of information, to share knowledge with him about his family, for example, "you" is a passive recipient. He just receives the information. However, if the purpose of the grandfather is to affect the hearer by telling stories that engage him in a certain way, then "you" is an active recipient. In such a context, the stories intend to teach something to the recipient or even to frighten him for example. Let us analyse the contextual use of semantic roles in (12a).

In fact, (12a) attests swé yà owomii *"a smoked fish"* as a patient direct object and nèènè *"mum"* as beneficiary indirect object. The understanding of the patient's meaning depends on the context of its use. By smoked fish, the speaker may refer to a meal for immediate consumption; that is, the literal meaning. He may also make reference to a symbolic meal cooked for a special opportunity, such as a birthday. At this moment, the patient semantic role has an emotional or cultural meaning because "smoke fish" here is not just a food, but rather an expression of love and tradition.

In addition, context also influences the meaning of the indirect object nèènè *"mum"* in (12a). The beneficiary semantic role may be passive if we consider that the action of cooking a smoked fish is performed for providing her the food. The indirect object is active in the context where Ikia, the subject, intends to perform this action as a cooking lesson. In this specific context, the speaker violates the quality maxim because he knows that a mum naturally knows how to cook a smoked fish. The implicature emerged from that violation is that nèènè "mum" is actively involved in learning a specific way of cooking a smoked fish, different from the one she is familiar with. Let us consider the implicatures in (16).

As a matter of fact, in (16), the theme direct object is ànè "*the way*". The semantic meaning of this thematic role is the physical path or road shown by Kanga, the subject. Depending on the context, the meaning of the direct object may vary. The way may refer to a metaphorical way as a guidance or a piece of advice. In the case of ànè mà otwèrè "*the way to wisdom*", for example, the way refers to a philosophy for achieving something; it may also be an approach or a strategy. In another context, ànè ma lébii "the way to salvation", the way makes reference to a system of belief; it has a spiritual guidance.

For the case of the recipient indirect object bisi *"us"*, the semantic role is passive in the case of exclusive person deixis. Kanga has provided us with information about a specific direction; we may not be in the movement yet. The subject is excluded in the moving action. In another context, however, the semantic role may be active. The indirect object refers to an inclusive indexical; that is, we followed Kanga while he guided us. The subject is physically involved in the movement. So, the understanding of indirect objects often depends on whether they are passive or active recipients or beneficiaries.

4. Conclusion
The understanding of the semantic roles in Embosi Grammar has provided a large insight into the interconnection between syntax, semantics and pragmatics. The study has revealed that Embosi direct objects have the semantic roles of affected, instrument, patient, phenomenon, and theme. Indirect objects, however, have the thematic roles of recipient and beneficiary. The work has

also proved that syntax interacts with semantics in the use of ditransitive verbs. The use of double objects reinforces the syntactic construction and influences the meaning of the whole sentence. The study also demonstrated that the use of the oblique object alters the emphasis of the verb action. It has also been shown that a simple cross-linguistic study of the semantic roles of Embosi and Lingala languages found similarities. Finally, the interaction of Embosi semantic roles with pragmatic principles has proved that their interpretation depends, not only on the speaker's intention and the participants relationship, but also and mainly on the context in which they occur.

4.1. Study limitations and future research work
This exploration, while focused on Embosi grammar, opens avenues for further research works. These studies will look at Embosi semantic roles related to the subject and the oblique object.; this overall view will help in the elaboration of pedagogical strategies for teaching semantic roles. We also invite researchers to delve deeply into Lingala semantic roles, aiming to provide a contrastive analysis across both languages.

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