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REMARKS ON SOME SYNTACTIC NOUN FEATURES IN SHONA[†]

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WE MAY REPRESENT the knowledge that we possess of the idiosyncratic properties of words as a kind of internalized dictionary, commonly referred to as a lexicon. It is a fact that, although a Shona speaker has never explicitly been told that certain verbs and adjectives may not have certain types of nouns as subject when they occur in deep structures of sentences,¹ he nevertheless knows very well that, for example, a noun like *mombe* (a cow) is not the type of noun that can occur as the subject of the verb *-verenga* (read), that a noun like *bótá* (porridge) cannot be the subject of an adjective like *-tatú* (three), that the verb *-nyórá* (write) must have as subject a noun with the property of humanness (e.g., *mudzídžisi*, teacher; *mwaná*, a child; *mukómaná*, a boy). Any grammar which is intended to describe our knowledge of our language must be able to account for this type of information among other things. It must be able to describe why string (1) is an acceptable sentence, while (2) is not:

- (1) *Mabháraní ákanyórá tsámbe.* (The clerk wrote a letter.)
- (2) **Mombe yákavérenge bhúku.* (*A cow read a book.)

The lexicon will contain in particular: (a) those aspects of phonological structure which it is not possible to predict by general rules; (b) those properties which are relevant to the functioning of transformational rules, e.g., subject raising, object deletion; (c) those properties of a lexical formative which are necessary for semantic interpretation; and (d) lexical features which show the positions in which a lexical formative can be inserted (by a lexical rule) in a preterminal string. Although a distinction is being made in this presentation between syntactic and semantic features, it should be noted nonetheless that this distinction is not clear-cut. It is still a vexed question. For instance, some linguists, such as Chomsky, would regard features such as [\pm count] and [\pm human] as syntactic, while others, such as Grinder and Elgin, would regard these same features as semantic.² It is not yet possible to determine the exact boundary between syntactic and semantic

[†] I am grateful for the comments of Professor G. Fortune on an earlier draft of this article.

¹ The view adopted in this article is that noun phrases which involve a noun and an adjective qualifier start off as sentences in the underlying structure.

² N. Chomsky, *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (Cambridge MA, M.I.T. Press, 1965); J.T. Grinder and S.H. Elgin, *Guide to Transformational Grammar* (New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973).

features. Nor is it known yet what range of syntactic and semantic features is available in natural languages or in any particular language. For the purposes in hand, however, a feature will be considered to be a purely semantic lexical feature if it is not referred to by any rule of either the phonological or the syntactic component. A feature is syntactic if it is referred to by some transformational rule of the syntactic component. A syntactic feature will determine, for instance, what pro-form should occur after some transformation has applied in a given type of sentence, or whether or not a given noun can be used with a secondary prefix. On the other hand a semantic feature will determine what lexical item is privileged to occur in a given frame as dictated by the other lexical items in that frame. The difference between phonological and syntactic features is obvious enough not to require elaboration. Since in this study the features mentioned above in (a), (c) and (d) play an insignificant role, they will not be discussed any further.

Syntactic features may influence in important ways the choice of words and/or their arrangement in surface structure. This will be illustrated later. These syntactic features may be subdivided into various types, depending precisely on the type of reference to a 'frame' that is implied. While some of these features for example [gender] and [\pm feminine], may be regarded as inherent in the sense that they specify a unit without any reference to a frame, others refer to the position of a formative in the phrase structure, e.g., [\pm noun], [\pm verb]. These latter features are called contextual or categorical features, and they define the lexical category to which a formative belongs. Still others specify the frame of constituents (of categories) in which a given formative can be inserted, e.g., + ___ NP, - ___ NP. These are commonly known as subcategorization features.

Syntactic features are concerned with subcategorization rather than with 'branching' or 're-write' rules. It would also appear that the only categories involved in this respect are those which comprise lexical formatives as members. It has already been noted by McCawley that re-write rules are an inappropriate device to effect subcategorization of lexical categories because this subcategorization is not strictly hierarchic, but involves instead cross-classification.³ Syntactic features will include rule specification, e.g., object raising. This rule will be applicable only to those sentences with verbs which are positively specified with respect to object raising.

The rest of this study will be concerned with those syntactic features which subcategorize nouns only. These features include: [gender], [\pm common], [\pm count], [\pm human], [\pm locative], [\pm abstract], [\pm time]. I shall try to adduce evidence indicating to what extent in a grammar of Shona these features are syntactically relevant.

³J.D. McCawley, 'Concerning the base component of a transformational grammar', *Foundations of Language* (1968), IV, 243-69.

1. The feature [+N]

Every noun in Shona when entered in the lexicon will be positively specified for the feature [+N], indicating that it belongs to the grammatical category 'noun', as opposed to the categories 'verb', 'adjective', etc. By a lexical redundancy rule every noun will be negatively specified for the categories 'verb', 'adjective', etc. It is obvious enough not to require discussion that lexical items specified for [+N] will enter certain syntactic frames from which lexical items specified for [+Verb] or [+Adjective] will be excluded.

2. The feature [gender]

This is a property of every noun in Shona. It is this feature which enables nouns to control concordial agreement within a noun phrase or a sentence. So much has been written in Shona, and indeed in Bantu languages as a whole, about grammatical concord which is dictated by nouns that it would be superfluous to dwell on it again here. The question of number is, however, another matter. Given the system of genders in Shona, whether the singular/plural feature can be said to be syntactically significant is in my view open to question. It would have been pertinent to dwell on this aspect at some length, but it is not possible in this short paper.

3. The feature [\pm common]

In order to appreciate the relevance of this feature in Shona it may be pertinent to dwell a little on primary and secondary prefixes. A prefix is considered to be primary with respect to a given noun if it is the usual or normal form that occurs with that noun when signifying a normal specimen of the phenomenon or object being referred to. For example, the stem *-kómaná* normally appears with either [gender 1] or [gender 2]. The nouns *mukómaná* (a boy) and *vakómaná* (boys) refer to a normal boy and normal boys respectively. There is no connotation of size or other quality implied.

However, it is quite common for a noun to possess a gender with which it is not normally associated. This happens when it is intended to supply information about some quality of the object referred to. That is, in addition to stating the type of specimen it is, something is also said about its size or other quality. For example, the stem *-kómaná*, in addition to occurring with [gender 1] and [gender 2], can also occur with the following genders:

- | | | | |
|------------|----|---|--|
| (3) gender | 5 | — | <i>gómaná</i> (a huge boy) |
| | 7 | — | <i>chikómaná</i> (a short and stout boy) |
| | 11 | — | <i>rukómaná</i> (a thin, emaciated boy) |
| | 12 | — | <i>kakómaná</i> (a small boy) |
| | 14 | — | <i>ukómaná</i> (boyhood) |

Thus the genders 5, 7, 11, 12 and 14 are used in secondary association in respect of

the noun *-kómaná*.⁴ The assumption made here is that primary prefixes will appear in deep structure while their secondary function will be accounted for by a transformational process.

Fortune has subdivided secondary prefixes into two groups, namely, commentary and supplementary prefixes. The former indicate special or abnormal specimens of the nouns referred to and they include genders 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12 and 13. The latter do not specify an object as abnormal but introduce a set of new and supplementary references; among those genders are 1a, 2a, 7, 14, 16, 17 and 18.

The feature common/non-common appears to be justified in a grammar of Shona on the grounds that, although sometimes two nouns may share the same gender among their features, one of them may take on a gender in secondary function because it is a common noun while the other may not, simply because it is not a common noun. For instance, the nouns *Sará* (the name) and *sekúru* (an uncle) each have [gender 1a]. But whereas we can say *kasekúru* (12) (an under-sized uncle) we cannot normally say *kaSará* (12) (a small Sara).⁵ Consider the noun *Haráre* as another illustration. This noun may have as one of its features [gender 9]. As with *Sará* above we cannot say, for example, *ruHaráre* (11), whereas with a noun like *mombe* (a cow), which also has [gender 9], we can happily say *rumombe* (11) (a thin under-sized cow). The nouns *sekúru* and *mombe* can each occur with a gender expressing a secondary idea, namely, genders 12 and 11 respectively in this case, because they are common nouns, and the nouns *Sará* and *Haráre* cannot, simply because they are not common nouns.

Given the division of secondary prefixes into those that are commentary and those that are supplementary, we observe that the feature [\pm common] is relevant only in respect of secondary prefixes of the commentary type. Hereunder are further examples involving commentary prefixes:

(4) a. With common nouns

<i>Primary association</i>	<i>Secondary association</i>
<i>badzá</i> (5) (a hoe)	<i>chipadzá</i> (7) (a worn-out hoe)
	<i>rupadzá</i> (11) (a despised hoe)
	<i>kapadza</i> (12) (a little hoe)
	<i>zibadzá</i> (21) (a big hoe)
<i>chipúnu</i> (7) (a spoon)	<i>kapúnu</i> (12) (a small spoon)
	<i>zipúnu</i> (21) (a big spoon)
<i>mhurú</i> (9) (a calf)	<i>chimhurú</i> (7) (a fat calf)
	<i>rumhurú</i> (11) (an undernourished calf)

⁴For primary and secondary prefixes see G. Fortune, 'The references of primary and secondary noun prefixes in Zezuru', *African Studies* (1970), XXIX, 81-110.

⁵The figure which occurs immediately after a noun in this article indicates the gender or noun class to which that noun belongs.

kamhurú (12) (a small calf)*zimhurú* (21) (a big calf)

b. with non-common nouns

Primary association *Secondary association**Zúze* (1a) (a name)**chiZúze* (7)**ruZúze* (11)**kaZúze* (12)**ziZúze* (21)*Dombóshava* (5)

(name of a hill)

chiDombóshava* (7)ruDombóshava* (11)**kaDombóshava* (12)*Zambézi* (1a)

(name of a river)

chiZambézi* (7)ruZambézi* (11)**kaZambézi* (12)**ziZambézi* (21)

However, supplementary prefixes can be used with both common and non-common nouns as illustrated below:

(5) a. With common nouns

*Primary association**dándá* (5) (a log)*Secondary association**Dándá* (1a) (a name)*váDanda* (2a) (Mr Danda)*padándá* (16) (at the log)*murombó* (1) (a poor man)*váMúrombó* (2a) (Mr Murombo)*urombó* (14) (poverty)*mumurombó* (18) (in a poor person)

b. With non-common nouns

*Primary association**Ali* (1a) (a name)*Secondary association**vaAli* (2a) (Mr Ali)*chiAli* (7) (in the manner of Ali)*Herá* (9/17a)

(name of a tribe)

muHerá (1) (member of Hera tribe)*uHerá* (14) (Buhera district)*chiHerá* (7) (in the manner of the Hera tribe)

4. The feature [\pm count]

4.1. Now consider the nouns *mutí* (a tree) and *muto* (soup), each of which has among its features [gender 3]. The noun *mutí* can be accompanied by the numeral *mumwé* (one, single) as in *mutí mumwé cheté* (one tree). But this is not possible with *muto*. The string *muto mumwé cheté* when taken to mean 'one or single' soup is ungrammatical. This string is, however, grammatical only if it means 'same soup' (i.e., the same as another). This latter meaning is also applicable to the string *mutí mumwé cheté* (the same tree). Take another example: the nouns *mago* (wasps) and *mamera* (sprouted grain) have each the feature [gender 6]. But whereas we can say:

- (6) *mago mavirí* (two wasps)
mago matatú (three wasps)
mago mana (four wasps)

we cannot say:

- (7) **mamera mavirí*
 **mamera matatú*
 **mamera mana*, etc.

Although in the case of *mutí* and *mago* we can speak of the one as a singular noun and the other as a plural noun, we do not have a plural noun which corresponds to *muto* nor do we have a singular noun which corresponds to *mamera*. The nouns *mutí* and *mago* are count nouns while *muto* and *mamera* are non-count nouns. This seems to confirm the syntactic relevance of the count/non-count feature in Shona. This argument relies on the behaviour of nouns with numeral adjectives.

4.2 It is noteworthy also that nouns like *muto*, *mamera* and *rudó* (love) may not be used with singular secondary prefixes of the commentary type, e.g.:

- | | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| (8) <i>muto</i> | * <i>chimuto</i> | * <i>rumuto</i> | * <i>kamuto</i> | * <i>zimuto</i> |
| <i>mamera</i> | * <i>chimamera</i> | * <i>rumamera</i> | * <i>kamamera</i> | * <i>zimamera</i> |
| <i>rudó</i> (love) | * <i>chirudó</i> | * <i>rurudó</i> | * <i>karudó</i> | * <i>zirudó</i> |
| <i>mvúrá</i> (water) | * <i>chimvúrá</i> | * <i>rumvúrá</i> | * <i>kamvúrá</i> | * <i>zimvúrá</i> |
| <i>chando</i> (cold) | * <i>chichando</i> | * <i>ruchando</i> | * <i>kachando</i> | * <i>zichando</i> |

But such nouns as *musíkaná* (a girl) and *badzá* (a hoe) may be used readily with singular secondary prefixes of the commentary type, e.g.:

- | | | | | |
|---------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| (9) <i>musíkaná</i> | <i>chisíkaná</i> | <i>rusíkaná</i> | <i>kasíkaná</i> | <i>zisíkaná</i> |
| <i>badzá</i> | <i>chipadzá</i> | <i>rupadzá</i> | <i>kapadzá</i> | <i>zibadzá</i> |

The point which is being made here is that nouns in the former group may not be used with singular secondary prefixes because they are non-count nouns, whereas those in the latter group can be so used because they are count nouns.

5. The feature [\pm human]

5.1. In asking certain questions in Shona the interrogative formatives used will depend on whether the noun phrase being questioned is human or non-human. If it is the former the interrogative formative employed is *aní* (who, whom), and *chií* (what) if the latter, e.g.:

- (10) a. *Sekai ákatsvódá Pawákwenyéwa.* (Sekai kissed Pawakwenyewa.)
 b. *Sekai ákatsvódá aní?* (Sekai kissed whom = Whom did Sekai kiss?)
- (11) a. *Vakómaná vákauráyá nyóká.* (The boys killed a snake.)
 b. *Vakómaná vákauráyá chií?* (The boys killed what = What did the boys kill?)
- (12) a. *Kateya ákapá Shayá bhóra.* (Kateya passed to Shaya the ball = Kateya passed the ball to Shaya.)
 b. *Kateya ákapá aní bhóra?* (Kateya passed to whom the ball = To whom did Kateya pass the ball?)
 c. *Kateya ákapá Shayá chií?* (What did Kateya pass to Shaya?)

Note, however, that in the case of those non-human nouns which refer to place or time—in other words, adverbials of place or time—they will not be substituted for by *chií*.⁶ These will be discussed later. The interrogative formative is chosen, not according to concord relationship with the object concerned, but in accordance with the expectation of syntactic category in the answer. The determining factor of syntactic subcategorization in this case is the human/non-human distinction.

If it is an object, direct or indirect, which is being questioned, that object is simply substituted for by *aní* or *chií* as the case may be. This is exemplified in (10)–(12) above. If it is a subject noun phrase that is being questioned, the same interrogative pro-forms are used but the sentence is modified a little. In addition to substituting for the string under consideration, the interrogative pro-form is stabilized, or, in other words, turned into a predicate with the rest of the sentence becoming a relative clause, as shown by the 'b' sentences of the examples which follow:

- (13) a. *Chipó ákabátwá némapúrisa nezúro.* (Chipo was arrested by the police yesterday.)
 b. *Ndíani ákabátwá némapúrisa nezúro?* (lit., it is who—the one arrested—by the police—yesterday = Who was arrested by the police yesterday?)
- (14) a. *Ndége ínofámbá némudénga.* (An aeroplane travels in the air.)
 b. *Chií chinofámbá némudénga?* (lit., it is what—which travels—in the air = What travels in the air?)

⁶ In Shona, adverbials of place and time are in effect noun phrases.

5.2. It is observed also that when two or more subject noun phrases or object noun phrases which refer to human beings are conjoined, the concord which they dictate and control together is usually that of [gender 2]. In the case of object noun phrases this concord is required sometimes as a substitute referent or as a co-referent. Examples (15)–(20) refer to conjoined subject noun phrases while (21)–(23) pertain to co-ordinated object noun phrases. (In these examples the number after a noun phrase indicates the gender or class of the head noun.)

- (15) *Mukómaná* (1) *némusíkaná* (1) *váří kútaurirana*. (A boy and a girl are talking to each other.)
- (16) *Sekúru* (1a) *nateté* (1a) *vánoúyá mangwána*. (Uncle and aunt will come tomorrow.)
- (17) *Varúmé* (2) *névakádzí* (2) *vácháénda kumusangano*. (Men and women will go to the meeting.)
- (18) *Sekúru* (1a) *nemúzukúru* (1) *vánodáná*. (An uncle and his nephew love each other.)
- (19) *Murimi uyu* (1) *nemádhoméni* (6) *vánonzwáná*. (This farmer and the agricultural demonstrators get on well.)
- (20) *Shámwarí yángu* (9) *nehárahwa íye* (9) *vákátósvorana*. (My friend and that old man quarrelled.)
- (21) a. *Ndaóna hanzvádzi* (9) *nehanzvadzi* (9). (I saw a brother and a sister.)
 b. *Ndaváona*. (I saw them.)
- (22) a. *Tícha ápa vakómaná* (2) *névasíkaná* (2) *ziviítsi*. (The teacher gave both boys and girls some sweets.)
 b. *Tícha ávapá ziviítsi*. (The teacher gave them some sweets.)
- (23) a. *Takásángana naJó* (1a) *naMatéznéni* (1a) *kwáMachípísa*. (As for Jo and Matenzi we met them at Machipisa.)
 b. *Jó naMatéznéni takásángana návo kwáMachípísa*. (As for Jo and Matenzi we met them at Machipisa.)

But when two or more subject noun phrases or object noun phrases which do not refer to human beings are conjoined the concord which they usually control together is [gender 8]. The examples in (24)–(26) pertain to conjoined subject noun phrases and those in (27)–(28) to conjoined object noun phrases.

- (24) *Pasí* (16) *nédenga* (5) *zvákásíkwa naMwarí*. (Earth and heaven were created by God.)
- (25) *Makudo* (6) *nembáda* (10) *zvákavéngáná*. (Baboons and leopards are enemies.)
- (26) *Bere* (5) *nédhongí* (5) *hazvídí kuónaná*. (A hyena and a donkey do not want to see each other.)

- (27) a. *Tinófudza mombe* (10) *nehwái* (10) *pamwé cheté*. (We let cattle and sheep graze together.)
 b. *Mombe nehwái tinózvífudza pamwé cheté*. (As for cattle and sheep we let them graze together.)
- (28) a. *Waóna kambwánaná* (12) *némhurú* (9) *kúpi?* (lit., you saw a puppy and a calf where = Where did you see a puppy and a calf?)
 b. *Wazvíona kúpi?* (lit., you saw them where = Where did you see them?)

In the strings (15)–(28) the choice of either concord *va-* or *zvi-* depends on whether the conjoined noun phrases refer to human beings or not. To that extent the human/non-human distinction is syntactically significant.

Occasionally, however, conjoined noun phrases which refer to human beings may control together either [gender 2] or [gender 8] as illustrated below:

- (29) *Murimi uyu* (1) *nemádhoméni* (6) *zvínonzwáná*. (cf. string (19).)
 (30) *Shámwarí yángu* (9) *nehárahwa íye* (9) *zvákátósvorana*. (cf. string (20).)

The following strings, however, are ungrammatical:

- (31) **Sekúru* (1a) *nateté* (1a) *zvínouyá mangwána*. (cf. string (16).)
 (32) **Varumé* (2) *névakádzí* (2) *zvícháénda kumusangano*. (cf. string (17).)

Further investigation is required here to determine when [gender 8] may or may not be used optionally with conjoined human noun phrases. What is uncontroversial, though, is that when human noun phrases are co-ordinated they control [gender 2] concord. That is, no cases have been found in which conjoined human noun phrases will control [gender 8] concord to the exclusion of [gender 2] concord.

When two non-human noun phrases, both plural and belonging to the same gender and semantic class, are joined together, they may optionally control the concord of their gender.

- (33) a. *Ndakátéma misasá* (4) *nemínhondo* (4) *yaívá mùmunda*.
 b. *Ndakátéma misasá nemínhondo zvaívá mùmunda*. (I cut down the musasa and munhondo trees which were in the field.)

It is significant that non-human noun phrases, unless they are personified, will never control the concord of [gender 2].

What is intriguing, though, is a conjoined structure which involves a human and a non-human noun phrase. If a choice of gender referring to the two noun phrases together has to be made, it will have to be that of [gender 8] rather than of [gender 2]:

- (34) *Muvhímí* (1) *némbwa yáké* (9) *zvákátsakatika*. (The hunter and his dog disappeared.)
- (35) **Muvhímí* (1) *némbwa yáké* (9) *vákátsakatika*.
- (36) *Ndakáona mukómaná* (1) *nemómbe dzáké* (10) *zvichínétsána*.
(lit., I saw a boy and his cattle troubling one another = I saw a boy being given a hard time by his cattle.)
- (37) **Ndakáona mukómaná* (1) *nemómbe dzáké* (10) *vachínétsána*.

Normally we tend to avoid conjoining such noun phrases. The human noun phrase is given the privilege of controlling concordial agreement while the non-human noun phrase is made an adverbial of some sort, usually a prepositional phrase:

- (38) *Muvhímí ákátsakatika pamwé cheté némbwa yáké*. (The hunter disappeared together with his dog.)
- (39) *Ndakáona mukómaná achínétsána nemómbe dzáké*. (I saw a boy having trouble with his cattle.)

It is noteworthy nevertheless that when two or more noun phrases are conjoined the concord which they control together is usually either that of [gender 2] or [gender 8], the former with human noun phrases and the latter with non-human noun phrases.

6. The feature [\pm locative]

6.1. There are certain verbs in Shona which require the presence of a locative noun phrase as an indirect object. To this end, consider the following sets of sentences:

- (40) a. *Tinóisa shuka mubótá*. (We put sugar into porridge.)
b. *Tinóisa mubótá shúka*. (We put into porridge sugar.)
c. *Tinóisa bótá shúka*. (lit., we put porridge sugar = we put into porridge sugar.)
- (41) a. *Simbí ákapá bhóra kuná Kudá*. (Simbi passed on the ball to Kuda.)
b. *Simbí ákapá kuná Kudá bhóra*. (Simbi passed on to Kuda the ball.)
c. *Simbí ákapá Kudá bhóra*. (lit., Simbi passed on Kuda the ball = Simbi passed on to Kuda the ball.)
- (42) a. *Ndakwéreta marí kushámwarí yángu*. (I borrowed some money from my friend.)
b. *Ndakwéreta kushámwarí yángu marí*. (I borrowed from my friend some money.)
c. *Ndakwéreta shámwarí yángu marí*. (lit., I borrowed my friend some money = I borrowed from my friend some money.)

The meanings of the sentences in each set are the same. The parts printed in bold type are locatives. In the 'a' sentences the locatives occur in a position after the direct object, but in the 'b' sentences these same locatives are placed immediately before the direct object.⁷ Although the 'b' sentences are not altogether rejected as ungrammatical, nevertheless they have a jarring effect. In other words, they are lower than 'a' sentences on the acceptability scale. On the other hand, if the locative noun phrases in the 'b' sentences have their locative features removed, these sentences become quite acceptable, as in 'c'. I shall refer to the transformation which has moved the locatives in the 'b' sentences as the Indirect Object Movement rule. The point being made here is that this rule is usually accompanied by the deletion of the locative feature. Notice also that in, for instance, (40)a, if the locative feature is deleted without moving the indirect object, the resulting string is an unacceptable sentence in the writer's dialect:

- (43) **Tinóisa shuka bótá.* (We put sugar porridge.)

This seems to suggest that the locative/non-locative feature is syntactically significant. In (41)a and (42)a if the locative feature is shed, the strings which result are, however, not totally unacceptable, but are lower on the acceptability scale.

6.2. In Shona there is a class of verbs which requires locatives as direct objects. In the examples which follow the locatives are set in bold type. If the locative feature is reduced, the strings become ill-formed, as indicated by the 'b' sentences:

- (44) a. *Mhúngú yápínda **muguru.*** (The black mamba slipped into a hole in the ground.)
 b. **Mhúngú yápínda guru.*
- (45) a. *Vaná vánoenda **kumushá mangwána.*** (The children will go home tomorrow.)
 b. **Vaná vánoenda mushá mangwána.*
- (46) a. *Tinósvika **pachikomo icho zúvá richínyúrá.*** (We shall arrive at that hill at sunset.)
 b. **Tinósvika chikomo icho zúvá richínyúrá.*
- (47) a. *Vanhu vésé vákanzí váúyé **kumusangano.*** (All the people were told to come to the meeting.)
 b. **Vanhu vésé vákanzí váúyé musangano.*

As has been pointed out already above, this class of verbs requires as direct objective a locative noun phrase. If the locative complement is left out in (44) the result is the ungrammatical sentence in (48):

- (48) **Mhúngú yápínda.* (*The black mamba entered.)

⁷ It is assumed in this article, but not proved because it is not crucial to the discussion in hand, that in the underlying structure the direct object comes before the indirect object.

This shows that the verb *-pinda* must be followed by a complement. Notice that sentences (45)–(46) would be grammatical even if the locative complement is left out. This is illustrated in (49)–(51):

- (49) *Vaná vánoenda mangwána.* (The children will go tomorrow.)
 (50) *Tinósvika zúvá richínyúrá.* (We shall arrive at sunset.)
 (51) *Vanhu vésé vákanzí váúyé.* (All the people were told to come.)

This is so because verbs like *-enda*, *-svika* and *-úyá* also belong to another subclass of verbs which permit the optional deletion of the object.

Note that noun phrases which function as adverbials of place will also be specified for the feature [locative].

The locative feature which is spelt out as *ku*, i.e. [gender 17], appears to be redundant with some locative nouns like *kumhiri* (on the bank of a river), *kuzasí* (down below), *kushúre* (behind), *kumberí* (in front), and place-names, which are on the whole not named after people, e.g. *kuDombóshava*, *kuHaráre*, *kuMazówe*. These locatives can also occur simply as *mhiri*, *zasí*, *shúre*, *mberí*, *Dombóshava*, *Haráre* and *Mazówe*, respectively. Places which take their names from people have in place of *ku* the possessive *kwa*, which is not deletable, e.g. *kwáMréwa*, *kwáMtóko*, *kwáMatámbo*. It is interesting to note that some place-names which were originally named after some people have through the passage of time changed the *kwa* to *ku*, e.g. *kuHaráre*, *kuSinóia*.⁸ One name which is still in the process of undergoing that change is *Mukáró* (a place in Gutu District). The concord used in all these cases is that of [gender 17], e.g.:

- (52) *kumberí uko* cf. *mberí uko* (in front there)
kuzasí kwáZambézi cf. *zasí kwáZambézi* (the lower reaches of the Zambezi)
kushúre kwédú kúrí kúnaya cf. *shúre kwédú kúrí kúnaya* (behind us it is raining)
kuSinóia ndíko kuné guva rábabá cf. *Sinóia ndíko kuné guva rábabá* (father's grave is at Sinoia)

This optional deletion of the locative feature does not happen in the case of the other two locative features, namely, *pa* and *mu*.

7. The feature [\pm abstract]

Non-count nouns may be subdivided into two groups on the basis of their use with some prefixes in secondary function. The relevant secondary prefixes here are *zvi-* of [gender 8] and *tu-* of [gender 13]. The prefix *zvi-* here has the meaning

⁸ Harare was named, according to one version, after a man who lived on Salisbury Kopje. It is said that he kept a fire burning on all nights at his village, and so people nicknamed him *Haarare* (he does not sleep), which was later corrupted to Harare.

The town of Sinoia got its name from Chief Chinoi, who used to live there a long time ago.

'despised, contemptible', while *tu-* means 'a little amount, not much'. The first group comprises those non-count nouns which can be used with either *zvi-* or *tu-*:

(53) <i>munyú</i> (3) (salt)	<i>zvimunyú</i>	<i>tumunyú</i>
<i>doví</i> (5) (groundnut butter)	<i>zvidoví</i>	<i>tudoví</i>
<i>maburo</i> (6) (boiled mixture of malt and water)	<i>zvimaburo</i>	<i>tumaburo</i>
<i>shuka</i> (9) (sugar)	<i>zvishuka</i>	<i>tushuka</i>
<i>rupiza</i> (11) (relish made from ground, roasted cow-peas)	<i>zvirupiza</i>	<i>turupiza</i>
<i>upfu</i> (14) (mealie meal)	<i>zviupfu</i>	<i>tuupfu</i>

The nouns in the second group do not allow these two prefixes generally:

(54) <i>rudó</i> (11) (love)	* <i>zvirudó</i>	* <i>turudó</i>
<i>ngonono</i> (10) (snoring)	* <i>zvingonono</i>	* <i>tungonono</i>
<i>tsvíyo</i> (10) (epilepsy)	* <i>zvitsvíyo</i>	* <i>tutsvíyo</i>
<i>mabayo</i> (6) (pain in side)	* <i>zvimabayo</i>	* <i>tumabayo</i>
<i>nzara</i> (9) (hunger)	* <i>zvinzara</i>	* <i>tunzara</i>
<i>havía</i> (9) (craving)	* <i>zvihavía</i>	* <i>tuhavía</i>
<i>hanganwá</i> (10) (forgetfulness)	* <i>zvihanganwá</i>	* <i>tuhanganwá</i>

It is observed that the nouns in the latter group are all abstract in nature, while those in the former group are non-abstract. They are concrete nouns. To this extent it would appear that the abstract/non-abstract feature is significant in Shona. However, the latter group is not very tight. While, for instance, nouns like *hópé* (10) (sleep) and *háshá* (10) (anger) are abstract in nature, they nevertheless can occur with the prefix *tu* in secondary association, as in *tuhópé* (12) (little sleep) and *tuháshá* (12) (little anger), but these nouns cannot occur with the prefix *zvi-*: **zvihópé*, **zviháshá*.

Notice also that there are some nouns which, though incorporeal in nature, are nevertheless count nouns syntactically, e.g.:

(55) <i>pfungwá imwé cheté</i> (9) (one idea)
<i>pfungwá mbirí</i> (10) (two ideas)
<i>mweyá mumwé cheté</i> (3) (one soul)
<i>mweyá mítatú</i> (4) (three souls)
<i>ngúvá imwé cheté</i> (9) (one time)
<i>ngúvá zhínjí</i> (10) (many times)

Such is the nature of the language.

8. The feature [\pm time]

It would appear that the head nouns of noun phrases which function as adverbials of

time should be considered to have as one of their cluster of features the feature [time].

That time adverbials as a grammatical category in Shona are noun phrases is shown immediately below. First, the head noun can be qualified in the usual way, e.g.:

- (56) *mangwánani áno* (6) (this morning)
nhási úno (1a) (lit., today this = today)

Secondly, they can control concordial agreement in clauses and sentences:

- (57) *goré rakápera* (5) (lit., the year which ended = last year)
manherú aákáúya (6) (the night on which he came)

When an adverbial of time in a sentence is questioned the interrogative formative used is *rínhi* (when). The choice of *rínhi* rather than any other interrogative formative is determined by whether or not the NP being questioned has the feature [time]. In the examples which follow, the time adverbials have been set in bold type:

- (58) a. *Vanhu vánoenda kumusangano mangwána.* (People go to the meeting **tomorrow**.)
 b. *Vanhu vánoenda kumusangano rínhi?* (lit., people will go to the meeting **when** = **When** will people go to the meeting?)
- (59) a. *Tinóvhara chikóro muná Zvitá.* (We close school **in December**.)
 b. *Tinóvhara chikóro rínhi?* (**When** do we close school?)
- (60) a. *Tsitsi ákábérekwa goré rakápera.* (Tsitsi was born **last year**.)
 b. *Tsitsi ákábérekwa rínhi?* (**When** was Titsi born?)

When referring to a specific time within the day or the month or the year, *rínhi* may be replaced by *ngúvai* (at what time):

- (61) a. *Ucháenda kudhoróbha nhási masakáti.* (You will go to town **today in the afternoon**.)
 b. *Ucháenda kudhoróbha nhási ngúvai?* (You will go to town **today at what time**?)
 c. **Ucháenda kudhoróbha nhási rínhi?*
- (62) a. *Chitíma chínosvika manherú.* (The train will arrive **in the evening**.)
 b. *Chitíma chínosvika rínhi?* (**When** will the train arrive?)
 c. *Chitíma chínosvika ngúvai?* (The train will arrive **at what time**?)
- (63) a. *Chitíma chínosvika nhási.* (The train will arrive **today**.)
 b. *Chitíma chínosvika rínhi?* (**When** will the train arrive?)
 c. **Chitíma chínosvika ngúvai?*

Notice that (63)c by itself would be grammatical, but considered as being related both structurally and semantically to (63) a and (63)b it is ungrammatical.

CONCLUSION

In this study I have tried to show the noun features which are syntactically significant in Shona. These are: gender, common/non-common, count/non-count, human/non-human, locative/non-locative, abstract/non-abstract, and temporal/non-temporal. These features will influence the syntax of sentences in Shona in one way or another. It may be concordial agreement, use with secondary prefixes, or with a certain type of adjective, or the choice of formatives with certain types of sentences. All this information should be accounted for in any grammar of Shona which purports to be descriptively adequate.