

On the Categories of Clausal Constituents in Lubukusu and Limits to their Selection

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The Bantu language Lubukusu has seven distinct kinds of clause-like constituents: finite clauses, subjunctives, actuals, derived nominals, and three types of infinitive, which differ in how their subjects are expressed. We show that two of these clause types are actually headed by a null noun, whereas four are not, and one (the null subject infinitive) is structurally ambiguous in this respect. This structural difference gives a unified account of several empirical differences among the clauses: whether they can be complements of prepositions, whether they can be in the subject position, whether they can extrapose to the right edge of the clause, and whether a phrase can be extracted from them. We then explore the implications of this category difference for a theory of selection, showing that the phrases that are headed by a noun cannot be specially selected for by the matrix verb, whereas those that are not headed by a noun can be. We infer from this that the selection of a verb for its clausal complement must be a syntactic matter as well as a semantic one.