

Mark Baker
Department of Linguistics, Rutgers University
18 Seminary Place, New Brunswick, NJ 08901, USA
Email: mabaker@ruccs.rutgers.edu

and

Ken Safir
Department of Linguistics, Rutgers University
18 Seminary Place, New Brunswick, NJ 08901, USA
Email: safir@ruccs.rutgers.edu

Title: Categories of Clausal Constituents in Lubukusu

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The Bantu language Lubukusu (Luyia group, Western Kenya) has several ways of expressing an embedded clause. These include full finite clauses with an overt complementizer, “reduced” finite clauses that have agreement but no complementizer or semantic tense, and nonfinite clauses with the class 15 prefix *khu-*. The infinitives divide into further subclasses, depending on how their subject is expressed: it can be phonologically null, or a bare NP before the verb, or a “possessive” NP that is after the verb and marked by the associative particle CLASS+*a*. These can all be used as the complements of suitable verbs, and it is not obvious what the syntactic differences are. However, we show that when they are used as sentential subjects an important three-way distinction is revealed.

Infinitives with null or possessive subjects appear easily in the subject position, they trigger matching class 15 agreement on the verb, and another NP can appear before them in a cleft:

- (1) (Wafula ni-ye ni-ye) [**khu**-cha (khw-a Wekesa)] **khw**-a-siim-isy-a.
 Wafula FOC-1 FOC-1 INF-go (15-ASSOC Wekesa) 15S-T-like-CAUS-FV
 It’s Wafula that [(Wekesa’s) going] pleased.

We conclude that these are fully nominal arguments, no different in their external syntax from simple NPs or derived nominals formed by prefixing *li-* (class 5).

At the other end of the spectrum are the reduced tenseless clauses, such as subjunctives. These are ungrammatical in the preverbal subject position:

- (3) *[Wekesa a-ch-e] li-kha-siim-isy-e Wafula.
 Wekesa 1S-go-SUBJN 5S-FUT-like-CAUS-SUBJN Wafula
 [That Wekesa would/should go] would please Wafula.

We conclude that these clauses are not nominal, and are not even arguments. They are possible only as the complements of verbs, where they undergo complex predicate formation with the verb.

The interesting intermediate cases are finite clauses with an overt complementizer and infinitival clauses with a preverbal subject. These are often tolerated in the subject position, but are sometimes judged mildly degraded. They tend to prefer class 5 agreement rather than the expected class 15 agreement, and clefting an NP over them is awkward or bad:

- (3) (?Wafula ni-ye ni-ye) [Wekesa **khu**-cha] **ly**-a-siim-isy-a (**?khw**-a-siim-isy-a)
 Wafula FOC-1 FOC-1 Wekesa INF-go 5S-T-like-CAUS-FV.
 It’s Wafula that [Wekesa going] pleased.
- (4) (*Wekesa ni-ye ni-ye) [bali Wafula a-a-ch-a] **ly**-a-siim-isy-a.
 Wekesa FOC-1 FOC-1 that Wafula 1S-T-go-FV 5S-T-please-FV
 It is Wekesa that [that Wafula left] pleased.

We conclude that these clauses are argumental, but not nominal. As such, they cannot occupy the true subject position, but rather bind that position from the sentence-initial topic position. As a result, the subject marker can reflect a null expletive in subject position rather than the clause itself, and there is interference with a clefted NP, also in the left periphery of the clause.

We can show converging evidence for this three-way distinction among clauses from PP complements and clausal extraposition. We conjecture that these differences among the different clause types in Lubukusu can provide the syntactic component of an explanation for why different verbs select different types of complements in this language, approximately but not exactly as in English.