Complementation strategies in Ruuli (Bantu)

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Talk outline

• The Ruuli language and its speakers
• Complementation: some terminology
• Goals and research questions
• The corpus and annotation
• Complementation strategies in Ruuli and causes of variation

• The article draft is available on request
The language and its speakers

- Ruuli (ISO 639-3: ruc)
- Two closely related varieties
- Other names: Luruuli/Lunyara, Luduuli, ...
- Great Lakes Bantu (Narrow Bantu, Niger-Congo) group of languages
- Previously underscribed
- Mainly in Nakasongola and Kayunga districts of central Uganda
- Up to 190,000 speakers
The language and its speakers

- Since January 2017:
  
  *A comprehensive bilingual talking Luruuli/Lunyara-English dictionary with descriptive basic grammar for language revitalisation and enhancement of mother-tongue based education*


- a corpus of over 200,000 words, primarily naturalistic dialogues
Morphosyntactic profile

• Primarily SVO with a lot of variation
• Synthetic verbal inflectional morphology: Seven prefix slots, five suffix slots
• Obligatory subject indexing (person, number, nominal class)
• Differential object indexing
• For phonotactic reasons verb stems are often followed by the so-called final vowel (FV) -a, unless there is a vowel-final suffix (not glossed later)

a) nje n-li-a nkodole.
   1sg 1sgS-eat-FV francolin(9)
   ‘I eat a francolin.’

b) Naye nje eisumu n-a-li-zw-ire=ku
   but 1sg spear(5) 1sgS-PST-5O-abandon-PFV=17.LOC
   ‘But I abandoned the spear.’
Complementation: some terminology

• **Syntactic** definition: “certain verbs can take a **clause**, instead of an NP, **as a core argument**. This is called a complement clause.” (Dixon 2006)

• **Semantic** definitions:
A biclausal syntactic constructions in which “a **notional** sentence or predication is an argument of a predicate” (Noonan 1985: 52)

“Complement relations link **two SoAs** such that one of them (the main one) entails that another one (the dependent one) is referred to” (Cristofaro 2003: 95)

→ **complement clauses proper** vs. **complementation strategies**
(i.e. not complement clauses, Dixon 1995, 2006)
In this study *complementation strategies* is used in the semantic sense and includes both complement clauses proper and other constructions.

- similar to *functional domain of complementation* in Deutscher (2000)
- similar to *complementation pattern* in Schmidtke-Bode (2014)
Research questions

• What complementation strategies are available in Ruuli?
• Do individual complement taking predicates (CTPs)/groups of CTPs have a preference for a specific strategy?
• Which semantic and structural conditions determine this preference?
• If a complement taking predicate can be used with several strategies, what determines their distribution?
The corpus and annotation

• A sample of over 1500 complement clauses annotated for
  - complement-taking predicate and its type
  - the form of the verb in the complement clause:
    finite indicative or subjunctive vs. infinitive
  - the presence of the complementizer: *nti, nga, others*
  - direct or indirect speech
  - coreference of arguments in the two clauses:
    same subject vs. different subject
  - illocutionary force (with utterance predicates)
  - proposition vs. state-of-affairs distinction
  - polarity of the two clauses
Research questions

• What complementation strategies are available in Ruuli? (focus on object complementation only)
Complement strategies in Ruuli: An overview

- **Main complement types** (based on the verb form):
  - infinitive complements \((o)ku\)- ‘INF’
  - indicative complements \(-a\) ‘FV’ (not in the gloss) or \(-ire\) ‘PFV’
  - subjunctive complements \(-e\) ‘SUBJ’

- **Complementizers**
  - \(nti\)
  - \(nga\)
  - \(oba\)

- **Position:** Object complements almost always follow the complement-taking predicate, but it is possible to let complement clauses precede or surround the verb.
Infinitive complements

• Marked by the class 15 prefix *ku*- and often the respective augment prefix *o*-

• INF do not show subject indexing and do not take TAM marking

• S/A argument cannot be expressed overtly, P argument is ok:

  a) *Tu-tandik-ire [ku- lia  bisolo  bya  bajungu]*.

  1plS-start-PFVINF-eat   animal(8)  8.GEN European(2)

  “We have started to eat animals of Europeans (i.e. pigs).”
Indicative and subjunctive complement clauses

• The **indicative** obligatorily indexes S/A and optionally P arguments

  Same TAM-marking as in the independent clause

  b) \( N\)-lowooza \[ba-ku-funa=mu \quad \text{kidooli}\].
  
  1sgS-think 3plS-PROG-get=LOC little
  ‘I think they benefit little.’
Indicative and subjunctive complement clauses

• The **subjunctive** is marked by the suffix -\(e\), which replaces the final vowel -\(a\) of IND
No other TAM-marking

c) Omwana  \(tu-ku-taka\)  \([a-kul-e]\).
child(1)  1plS-PROG-want  3sgS-grow.up-\textbf{SUBJ}
‘We want the child to grow up (while it is calm).’

• The form and the function (hortative, optative, modal meaning) of this suffix are similar to the cognate ones in closely related Great Lakes Bantu languages (Nurse & Muzale 1999)
The most common complementizer *nti* optionally introduces indicative complements, but never subjunctives or infinitives.

d) *Ti-n-ku-loleera*  
NEG-1sgS-PROG-see  

\[ *nti \quad a-li=wo*  
COMP  
3sgS-be=16.LOC

*e-ki-yinza*  
REL-7S-may  
INF-be  
7-difficult

`}ekintu `thing(7) `I don’t see that there is something which may be difficult.`
Indicative complement, complementizer *nti*

• The form *nti* is also used as a quotative marker to introduce direct report without any complement taking predicates:
  a) *nti* “Bugereere”.
     QUOT Bugereere ‘(I say) “Bugere.”’
  b) *nti* “Mu Banyala?”
     QUOT 18.LOC Banyala ‘(They ask) “From Banyala?”’
  c) *nti* “Yee!”
     QUOT yes ‘(I say) “Yes!”’

• *nti* is used both with indirect reported speech and with various CTPs that do not necessarily report speech → another example of an item where the distinction between a quotative and a complementizer is blurred (see Güldemann 2008)
Complementizers *oba*

- Less frequent complementizers *oba* ‘whether’ and * nga* ‘when, while’, other marginal complementizers, e.g. *ati*

- *oba* ‘whether’ with IND complements expresses doubt/uncertainty towards the proposition
  e)  *Ti*-*maite*  
  **[oba ki-kola]**.  
  NEG.1SSG-know  
  COMP 7S-work  
  ‘I don’t know whether it works.’

- *oba* is otherwise used with the meaning ‘or’ to coordinate two noun phrases, verbs, and other units of the same type
Complementizers *nga*

- Less frequent complementizers *oba* ‘whether’ and *nga* ‘when, while’, other marginal complementizers, e.g. *ati*

- *nga* marks complements expressing direct perception (possibly other functions), also used as a conjunction ‘when, while’

  f)  M-puura [empewo *nga* e-ku-nya-kala-ku].
  1sgS-hear 9.wind COMP 9S-PROG-1sgO-pass-LOC
  ‘I hear the wind passing over me.’
Goals and research questions

✓ What complementation strategies are available in Ruuli?

• Do certain complement taking predicates have a preference for a specific strategy?
Complement taking predicates

• over 60 complement-taking predicates recur in the sample of 1500 complement constructions we annotated
• further complement-taking predicates were identified in the lexicon of Ruuli (10,000 items, Namyalo et al. in progress) and in elicitations, they are not included into this study
• CPTs were first grouped into 7 classes for convenience: modals, phasals, desideratives, knowledge, prop.attitude, utterance and perception predicates
• the most frequent CTPs: *okukoba* ‘say, tell’ (*utterance*), *okutandika* ‘start’ (*phasal*), *okubona* ‘see’ (*perception*), *okwendya* ‘like, need, want’ (*desiderative, modal*), ...
Complementation strategies: frequent classes

Total of 1123 tokens of complementation strategies
Goals and research questions

- Do certain complement taking predicates have a preference for a specific strategy?
  - Some predicate classes (modals and phasals) are rather homogenous, whereas other show a lot of variation
  - The infinitive is the most widely used construction, but its frequency varies between predicate classes
Goals and research questions

✓ What complementation strategies are available in Ruuli?
✓ Do certain complement taking predicates have a preference for a specific strategy?

• Which semantic and structural conditions determine this preference?
• If a complement taking predicate can be used with several strategies, what determines their distribution?
Complementation strategies: frequent classes

Total of 1123 tokens of complementation strategies
The subjunctive

• Desideratives are most often used with INF and SUBJ
• The (not) sharing of participants between matrix and complement clauses matters
• Same subject a) *Tu-ku-taka [ku-ki-yindula].*
  1plS-PROG-want INF-7O-change
  ‘We want to change it.’
• Different subject
  b) *Tu-ku-taka [mu-ta-e=wo elesoni…].*
  1plS-PROG-want 2plS-introduce-SUBJ-LOClesson(9)
  ‘We want you to introduce a lesson.’
Desiderative predicates by construction (all)

Verb

- subj
- hope
- expect
- ask
- want
- need

Construction
- SUBJ
- IND
- INF

Count

DS

SS
Complementation strategies: frequent classes

- Modal
- Phasal
- Desiderative
- Propositional attitude
- Knowledge
- Perception

Predicate class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>SUBJ</th>
<th>IND</th>
<th>IND+nti</th>
<th>IND+nga</th>
<th>IND+oba</th>
<th>direct report</th>
<th>direct report+nti</th>
<th>INF</th>
<th>(NP+)REL</th>
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<td>Strategy</td>
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Total of 1123 tokens of complementation strategies
Which semantic and structural conditions determine this preference?

A hypothesis: the contrast between states-of-affairs and proposition might play a role in the choice of complementation strategies (cf. Lyons 1977; Hengeveld 1990; Dik and Hengeveld 1991; Cristofaro 2003; Boye 2012)

- **states-of-affairs**/actions/events,
  i.e. non-truth valued meaning units
vs.

- **propositions**, i.e. truth valued meaning units
Causes of variation: State-of-affairs and propositions

• Complement contrasts (Boye 2012: 188-194; Boye & Kehayov 2016):

1. a. I know *(that) he was writing a letter*. ➔ proposition
   b. I know *how to write a letter*. ➔ state-of-affairs

2. a. I told her *(that) he was writing a letter*. ➔ proposition
   b. I told her *to write a letter*. ➔ state-of-affairs

3. a. I saw *(that) he was writing a letter*. ➔ proposition
   b. I saw *him write a letter*. ➔ state-of-affairs
Utterance predicates

• Reported assertion (proposition) with indicative complement

a) o-a-kobere [nti byona okanca niye a-li aiguru] 2sgS-PST-say COMP 8.all 1.god COP.1 3sgS-be above
   ‘You said that it is God that is above everything.’

• Reported directive (state-of-affairs) with subjunctive or infinitive complement

b) tu-a-a-mu-kob-ire [a-tu-weery-e=yo omusaayi] 1plS-PST-3sgO-say-PFV 3sgS-1plO-give-SUBJ-LOC 3.blood
   ‘We told him to give us some blood.’
Perception predicates

- Indirect perception/acquisition of knowledge (proposition) with IND
  a)  *m-puura [a-zwamu  alubaawo]*
      1sgS-hear 3sgS-produce 11.timber
      ‘I hear it produces timber.’

- Direct perception (state-of-affairs) with *nga*-complement
  b)  *m-puura [empewo nga e-ku-n-yakala=ku]*
      1sgS-hear 9.wind COMP 9S-PROG-1sgO-pass=LOC
      ‘I hear the wind passing over me.’
Further generalizations

• The absence or presence of the complementizer *nti* with indicative complements does not appear to be correlated with any semantic contrast, nor does *nti* disambiguate direct reported speech from indirect reported speech
Conclusions

• Complement taking predicates vary as to which complementation strategies they can be combined with.

• Variation with some classes can be explained by the difference between state-of-affairs vs. propositions and by the contrast between same-subject/different-subject constructions.
Conclusions

• IND complements (optionally with *nti* and *oba*) occur in constructions where the complement is arguably *propositional*.
• INF and SUBJ generally express *states-of-affairs*: Non-epistemic modals as well as phasals, desideratives and directive utterance-predicates, which have been related to state-of-affairs, occur with INF and/or SUBJ and do not occur with complementizers.
• No one complement type appears to be completely polyfunctional between the two readings as is the case in some languages (Boye 2010).
• On the other hand, there is tendency for complement-taking predicates to be polyfunctional and take more than one type of complement.
Thank you!