

Nominal Phrase Structure in Ikyausi (M.402)

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Abstract

Linguistic treatments of Bantu languages have traditionally focused on broadly historical/comparative studies or on prototypical characteristics of the family, such as the nominal class system, the complexity of the verbal TAM system, or the tonal system. Consequently, far less attention has been placed upon the nominal phrase as a syntactic unit. To this end, Rugemalira (2007) proposes greater emphasis on Bantu morphosyntax generally. As such, the present study--situated within a broader discussion of the Bantu NP (cf. Chitebeta 2007, Godson and Godson 2015, Lusekelo 2009, Makanjila 2019, Möller 2011, Ondondo 2015, Rugemalira 2007)--builds upon Spier (2020) and introduces the first descriptive account of the nominal phrase in Ikyausi, an underdocumented linguistic variety spoken in the Republic of Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The data for this study, which arrive from fourteen narratives shared orally by male and female native speakers of the grandparental generation, indicate that seven distinct elements may co-occur with the nominal, but utterances with between one and three co-occurring adnominals are far more frequently attested and comprehensible to speakers.

Keywords: nominal phrase; noun classes; morphosyntax; adnominal modifiers; Bantu language

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