

The conjoint/disjoint distinction in VPs and NPs in Haya

Kristina Riedel

University of Dar-Es-Salaam - Tanzania

Many Bantu languages display a cross-linguistically rare way of morphological focus marking on the verb (Hyman & Watters 1984, Creissels 1996). This is commonly referred to as the conjoint/disjoint distinction. Morphologically the conjoint/disjoint distinction is linked to tense but it functions to mark focus as well as phrase boundaries. In the Bantu languages which show the distinction, a verb form in a number of tenses will have both conjoint and disjoint variants. This phenomenon has been studied for a number of Bantu languages, including the Nguni languages (van de Spuy 1993, Buell 2005), Makhuwa (Stucky 1979 and van der Wal 2006, forthcoming), Rundi (Meeussen 1959) and across Bantu (Güldemann 2003 and Nurse 2008). However, there is a second way of marking verbs as conjoint in a number of Bantu languages which have a morphological conjoint/disjoint distinction: tonal reduction on the verbal word (Hyman 1999). Although this phenomenon has been described for a number of Lacustrine Bantu languages, such as Rundi (Meeussen 1959), Luganda and Haya (Hyman 1999), this strategy of marking the conjoint form has not been studied for its syntactic and focal properties. Moreover, tonal reduction also takes place in noun phrases in those languages (Hyman 1999). Cross-linguistically, noun phrases (DPs) have been argued to include a focus projection (Bernstein 1997, Brugè 2002). In this paper, I analyze the conjoint/disjoint distinction in Haya (J22) verb phrases and noun phrases, looking at both types of conjoint/disjoint marking in terms of their syntactic and focal properties and at whether they ought to be analyzed as including a focus projection.