

The forgotten relative clause of Ikalanga and Luganda

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Demuth and Harford (1999) contend that in Bantu relatives, the verb raises from I-C if the relative morpheme is a prosodic clitic/bound morpheme while the subject remains in spec-IP hence these languages have subject –verb inversion . Although some authors point out the rarer relative clause of some Bantu languages such as Luganda in which no subject verb inversion occurs despite the fact that the relative morpheme is a bound morpheme, no one really discusses this particular structure. Ikalanga, a Bantu language spoken in Botswana employs the Luganda type of relative clause, that is, the language has no subject verb inversion in relatives although the relative morpheme appears to be a bound morpheme. This observation challenges the conclusion reached in Demuth and Harford (1999) that when the relative is a prosodic clitic the verb must raise to C. This raises the question, ‘what then is the structure of the relative clause in languages like Ikalanga and Luganda? This paper explores this question investigating the following two alternative analyses: a) a very simple and straightforward analysis whereby the verb raises only as far as T while the subject raises to spec-TP and the head noun raises to spec-NP of the NP that takes CP as its complement ala Chomsky 1977 or Kayne’s (1994) analysis. The second analysis is in line with Demuth and Harford’s analysis where there is I-C movement but this requires explaining why there is no subject verb inversion in the said languages. The paper will argue in favor of the former analysis using tests such as selectional restrictions of the verb, adverb placement and agreement facts as evidence in support of the analysis.