

The ciNsenga causative construction and the structure of events

Silvester Ron Simango

Rhodes University – South Africa

Morphological causatives, cross-linguistically, are formed by attaching an affix to a verb; and the process generally results in the alteration of the verb's argument structure by the addition of one argument and the change in the verb's meaning from "X" to "cause to X". In ciNsenga (Bantu) five variants of the causative affix appear on the verb: these affixes can be classified into two broad categories based on their productivity, phonological and distributional characteristics. This study shows that although all causative affixes are similar with respect to their syntactic effects on the verb, the affixes differ with respect to the event structures with which the affixes are associated. One class of causative is associated with simple events whereas the other is associated with complex events. The paper argues that an insightful account of the Bantu causative construction needs to take cognizance of the complexity of event structure.