



Syntactic Descriptions of Conjunctions in Kémunasukuma Dialect of Kisukuma

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Article History

Received: 24.10.2024

Revised: 06.03.2025

Accepted: 09.03.2025

Published: 14.03.2025

Keywords

Conjunction
Kémunasukuma
Relevance
Syntax

How to cite:

Simon, C., & Masanja, N. (2025). Syntactic Descriptions of Conjunctions in Kémunasukuma dialect of Kisukuma. *Journal of Linguistics, Literary and Communication Studies*, 4(1), 23-34.

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Abstract

The article is on syntactic descriptions of conjunctions in Kémunasukuma dialect of Kisukuma under Relevance Theory which is geared toward relevance communication as the interaction between cognition and context. The lack of any study on the topic under discussion motivated the current descriptions preferably with cognitive semantics theory. The study used an interpretivism paradigm veiled in a qualitative approach, based on the fact that the data comes from natural settings. The study used a descriptive study design to describe the syntactic and semantics of conjunctions from Sukuma population in Kisesa ward of Nyamagana district in Mwana region. Three methods of data collection were used, namely, focus group discussion, intuition knowledge, and critical documentary analysis. Ten Sukuma native speakers were selected purposively for the discussion, the selection based on the fact that were bilingual native speakers of the language. The study revealed two forms of conjunction: coordinating conjunctions as in na, ni, nu, nulu, ila, lelo or leluu, aliyo, lakini, and subordinating conjunctions as in, hanuma nu, hanumana, kunguno, kulwanguno, hamo and giki. Basing on the findings, it was concluded that such syntactic word category contributes to and strengthens the development of syntactic theories. The study urges other studies be carried out on other functors (determiners, pronouns) which with no doubt would contribute to the grammar of the language to both this generation and generations yet to come.

Introduction

This paper presents a descriptive study of the syntactic and semantic meanings of Kisukuma conjunctions. As one of the eight parts of speech, a conjunction is an indeclinable element that links other parts of speech, classifying their meanings or relationships (Malmkjær, 1991). Conjunctions have been examined under various labels and have attracted considerable attention from numerous scholars in the field of linguistics over time. For instance, Halliday and Hasan (1976) refer to them as “linguistic devices that create cohesion”, while Sanders and Maat (2006) describe them as a “semantic relation that is explicitly marked”. Given this understanding, there is a need to investigate conjunctions in languages beyond English to determine whether there are peculiarities related to the type, form, and meaning of Kisukuma conjunctions.



In modern linguistics, the phenomena of functional and communicative aspects are increasingly shifting towards the pragmatic dimension of language (Numanjanovna & Ikromjonovna, 2022, p. 525). As one of the minor word classes, conjunctions have been extensively studied in English, unlike in other languages worldwide; therefore, this gap needs to be addressed. Numanjanovna and Ikromjonovna (2022) examined the semantic peculiarities of conjunctions in both English and Uzbek. In their article, conjunctions are categorised into semantic groups based on the meanings they convey in a sentence. This study is particularly significant for the current research, especially regarding structural aspects, as it highlights the importance of conjunctions in usage.

Batibo (1976) explored the diachronic perspective of tone in Kisukuma, Goldsmith (1984) examined Kisukuma tone, Matondo (2003) investigated tonal transfer in Kisukuma verb reduplicants, and Roberts (1992) assessed the non-metrical theory of Sukuma tone. These studies suggest that the Kisukuma language has not been studied collectively. Other Sukuma linguists who investigated on tone are Goldsmith (1984); Matondo (2003); Richardson, (1971) and others Sukuma linguists researched on verb extensions as in Muhdhar (2006); Lothi, (2002), etc. With this evidence, conjunction desires analysis.

Jackson (2013) conducted a semantic analysis of Kisukuma spatial prepositions using Image Schema theory. His study revealed Kisukuma prepositions such as *ha 'at'*, *mu 'in'*, *ha bhutongi 'ahead'*, *hanuma 'behind'*, *hasilili 'downward, below, or under'*, and *higulya 'above'*. Jackson's study is highly significant for the current investigation, ascertain words, phrases, clauses, and sentences presented in the Kisukuma language can provide a source of second-hand data for this research.

Theoretical Framework

This study follows the Relevance Theory proposed by Sperber and Wilson (1986b). This theory aims to provide a psychologically realistic perspective on communication and human interpretation. Sperber and Wilson (1986b) argue that Relevance Theory is based on two sets of assumptions: cognition and communication. The former relates to the notion that relevance balances effort and effect, along with maximizing relevance. The latter suggests that understanding an utterance involves inferring the speaker's communicative and informative intentions. The essence of Relevance Theory centres on communication, which aligns with the Gricean assertion that comprehending an utterance requires inferring what the speaker intended to convey from what they express. The current investigation into conjunctions is pertinent to Relevance Theory as it explores the utilization of conjunctions by Sukuma native speakers in communication and the meanings these conjunctions carry during interactions. In other words, it examines the advantages of their communication through conjunctions and their cognitive abilities as positive cognitive effects.

Methodology

The study employed a case study design. Kombo and Tromp (2006) define research design as the framework integrating all the elements of a research project. Thus, the study utilised the Kémunasukuma dialect of the Kisukuma language as a case study. A case study is argued to be closely linked to qualitative research (Gray, 2014). Consequently, the study adopted a qualitative research approach due to the typological phenomena under investigation. The rationale for choosing a qualitative approach was that only descriptions, interpretations, and explanations of primary data from Kisukuma verbal morphs were provided through verbal forms during data analysis and discussion (Simon, 2018). The current study employed a purposive sampling frame to select ten native Sukuma informants for focus group discussions in two sessions. The selection criteria included (i) bilingual Sukuma native speakers proficient in both Kisukuma and Kiswahili, (ii) an age



range of 70 to 80 years, and (iii) speakers of the Kémunasukuma dialect of Kisukuma, specifically from the Mwanza region and Kisesa ward of Nyamagana district.

The study of Sukuma conjunctions utilised three instruments: focus group discussions, intuitive techniques, observation, and critical documentary analysis. In the focus group discussions, ten native speakers of Sukuma were selected, comprising five males and five females. The discussion guides were prepared in Kiswahili, and the Sukuma native speakers were asked to translate phrases, clauses, and sentences into Kisukuma. For instance, "John *na* Neema," meaning 'John and Neema,' was translated as "U John Nu Neema." The researcher, a native speaker of Kisukuma, is proficient in reading, writing, and speaking the grammar of the language and has been part of the Sukuma speech community for nearly 40 years. Thus, he relied on his intuitive knowledge as a data source, which was subsequently confirmed and validated by other Sukuma natives for reliability. In doing so, the researcher took notes as reference material during the data analysis stage. Finally, the researcher employed non-participant observation, which involves observing without direct participation. This approach was adopted during interactions at markets and ceremonies. The primary aim was to observe language within the natural contexts of use, aligning with the interpretivist paradigm's assertion that meaning and truth are understood within the context of cultural social life (Crotty, 1998). This was achieved during two ceremonial events as well as in market places.

The data were analysed qualitatively without any statistical calculations. Relevance Theory (cf. Sperber and Wilson 1995) was utilised to analyse the data thematically according to the representation technically referred to as the *Leipzig Glossing Rule* (Christian, 1982). This rule consists of three levels: word order, literal translation (morphological glossing), and free translation. References to the Citumbuka and Kiswahili data, both Bantu languages, are provided below in sections 1-2:

1. *Timb-an-il-an-a pa* (Citumbuka language)
Hit -REC-APPL-REC-field
'Hit each other at the farm' (Chavura, 2016, p. 208)
2. *Kop-esh -e -w-a* (Kiswahili language)
Borrow-CAUS -PPL-PASS-V
'Be made to borrow' (Kihore & Massamba, 2008, p. 129).

The data representation in 1-2 is presented using the *Leipzig Glossing Rule*, which encompasses three levels of representation: the word order and/or parsing level, the literal translation, and the free translation level. This approach has assisted non-Bantu-speaking linguists in comprehending and interpreting the available data.

Results and Discussion

This subsection presents data relevant to the syntactic and semantic descriptions of conjunctions in Kisukuma. The study identified fourteen conjunctions found in both the Kisukuma language and the Kémunasukuma dialect, namely: *na*, *ni*, *nu*, *giki*, *hamo*, *aliyo*, *null*, *ila*, *lakini*, *kunguno*, *kulwanguno*, *hanuman nu*, *hanumanhangi*, and *lelo*. The next section describes each conjunction.

Coordinating conjunctions

Na: This is one of the Kisukuma conjunctions used to connect sentences for meaning. *Na* is regarded as a simple conjunction, made up of only one word in the language being discussed. The figure below demonstrates how the *na* functions as a conjunction, linking two elements. The semantics of



Kémunasukuma specifically, the term '*na*' represents the surface structure presented in section 4 above.

In a very different manner and at the level of discussion, what is known as the conjunction *-na-* in the current investigation is identified as a preposition in other Kisukuma literature (see Thobias, 2013). The author revealed that *na-* functions as a preposition equivalent to the English preposition 'with'. Thus, it indicates an instrumental aspect in a sentence and is lexically marked. Consider the following data in 6:

It tells us the relationship between the subject (Rachel) and the instrument (a spoon).

6. *Rachel a-li-lya na shijiko*
 Rachel 3PS-PRES-eat PREP spoon
 'Rachel is eating with a spoon' (Thobias 2013, p. 28)

The data in 6 shows that '*na*' is used as a preposition rather than as a conjunction. However, the structure remains ambiguous since *Rachel* is eating alongside the person known as *Kijiko*, who is also eating. Additionally, the use of '*na*' in example six (6) aligns with relevance theory, as it indicates that the utterance is expressed in a way that minimizes the listener's effort to process its semantic scope. In other words, the conjunction '*na*' has functionally and pragmatically transformed from the conjunction domain into the preposition domain.

Nu: This is another conjunction found in the Kisukuma language of Tanzania. *Nu* is a simple conjunction comprising just one word in the language discussed. This conjunction demonstrates concordance through a suffix-prefix agreement with '*U*' in Kisukuma. See the data in section 7 below:

7. (a) *U-bhabhaNu Mayu bha-li-lima*
 PS-father conj mother PS-TNS-dig
 'The father and the mother are digging'
- (b) *U-Malundi Nu U-nke bhi-zile-igolo*
 PS -Malundi conj PS-wife PS-came-yesterday
 'Malundi and his wife came yesterday'

The conjunction "*nu*" serves an additive function in the context of friendship or possessions. This indicates that the first subject is complemented by the second clause, which expresses the possessiveness of the former. The data in 7 (a-b) is evident to relevance theory (see Sperber & Wilson, 1995) in that the speaker has in mind the valuable concept and its significance to the hearer. In other words, the structural meaning is cognitively pertinent to the context of the interlocutors.

Nulu: The Kisukuma conjunctions are employed to connect two parts of sentence structures. *Nulu* is characterised as a simple conjunction, comprising only one word in the language being discussed. Please consult the data in 8 below:

8. (a) *U-ngwana wako Nulu Mayu wakwe ng'wilage wize*
 PS-child your conj mother your tell come
 'Your child or his or her mother tell him/her to come'
- (b) *Ngemage U-Malundi Nulu shimbe wakwe*
 Test PS-Malundi conj- spinster his
 'Let (you) test Malundi or his spinster'



The data in 8 indicates the conjunction "nulu," which allows for alternatives. This idea was supported by Leech and Svartvik (1994, p. 267), who maintained that the conjunction "or" is frequently employed in discourse to provide alternatives. The functions of these conjunctions are considered evidence within the theory of Metaphor. According to relevance theory, Allot (2008) noted that the environment encompasses many more communicative issues than human explanations can account for. To clarify, the pragmatic situation is a trade-off between the effort exerted and the benefits gained from such actions. This is why the structures in 8 communicate more than what is conveyed through the conjunction; there are fundamental reasons for interlocutors to engage in such actions.

Ila: The Kisukuma conjunction is used to join two thoughts with incomplete or imperfect predictions about actions. Semantically, this conjunction indicates that the meaning of the utterances falls within a range of probability and that it corresponds to the English term 'But'. See the data in 9 below:

9. (a) *U-Manugwa a-kuzunya ila U-Jane a-ku-lemma*
 PS-Manugwa 2PS-agree conj PS-Jane 2PS-TNS-disagree
 'Manugwa will agree but Jane will disagree'
- (b) *U-Malundi nogi ila U-Shigela ati nogi*
 PS-Malundi witch conj PS-Shigela is.not witch
 'Malundi is witch doctor but Shigela is not'

The two clauses have been conjoined by the simple conjunction *-ila-*, which conveys the concept of contrast between the two complete clauses. In other words, *-ila-* is the preferred linking word for expressing contrast (Ball, 1996, p. 28).

Lakini: Lakini is one of the Kisukuma conjunctions used to join sentences for meaning. It is noted that this conjunction is borrowed from the Kiswahili language of East Africa and is equivalent to *the* English conjunction 'but', which is a simple conjunction. Refer to the data in 10 below:

10. (a) *U-ng'walimu a-ka-langa lakini U-ng'wana a-ka-tindwa*
 PS-teacher PS-TNS-teach conj PS-child PS-TNS-fail
 'The Teacher instructed but the child failed'
- (b) *Ngemage U-Malundi lakini U-ku-kumya-ng'wenেকে*
 Test PS-Malundi conj PS-TNS-wonder-yourself
 'Let (you) test Malundi but you will wonder yourself'

In 1990, it was noted that such conjunctions are often employed in spoken discourse to denote contrast (Altenberg, 1996, p. 27). This suggests that these conjunctions cannot connect categories beyond clauses or subordinate clauses, except when paired with phrases that convey negative meanings, which are, in turn, coordinated contradictorily: negative (Leech & Svartvik, 1994, p. 265). The application of relevance theory in this structure is extensive, as the context of the speakers is contextualised to maximise relevance. In other words, students failed despite the teacher's guidance; here, the listener has smoothly processed the rationale for the students' failure due to the contextual factors of which both the speaker and listener are aware (Sperber & Wilson, 1995).

Aliyo: This is yet another Kemunasukuma conjunction whose semantics are synonymous with the borrowed preposition 'lakini' (Cf. 10) from the Kiswahili language of East Africa. The particle connects independent clauses by illustrating semantic oppositeness. This can be exemplified in the data below in 11:



11. *U-Nangwa a-kw-iza aliyo u-Nangi a t-íza*
 PS-student PS-will-come conj PS-teacher PS-not-come
 'The students will come but their teacher will not come'

The conjunction in (11) indicates two points: one is affirmative, while the second sentence negates the first. Thus, students express that they will attend, whereas their teacher will not. Sukuma native speakers use the conjunction *aliyo* 'but' interchangeably with the borrowed conjunction *lakini* 'but' from Kiswahili, a language of East Africa. The preposition *aliyo* pragmatically signifies a reason based on expectation; this is also juxtaposed within the principle of relevance, as speakers' cognition (perception, reasoning, and understanding) tends to focus on maximising relevance (Sperber & Wilson, 1986b, p.260). Therefore, the fact that students will attend but the teacher will not be prompted by relevance-related reasons for the assertion and effort.

Lelo: Lelo is a straightforward conjunction among those found in the language under discussion, namely Kisukuma. The particle *lelo* is semantically employed as a dependent lexeme, meaning either 'likewise' or 'while'. In other words, *lelo* serves as a pragmatic conjunction in Kisukuma, whose relevance is both cognitive and communicative; this directly relates to relevance theory, as it seeks to explain similarity in both spoken and written discourse. Importantly, its meaning can signify conjunction, direction, or time. Refer to the data in 12 below:

12. (a) *U-Ng'walimu a-li-langa lelo U-ng'wana funzi a-landika*
 PS-teacher Ps-Fut conj PS-student Ps TNS-write
 'The teacher is teaching but the student is writing'
- (b) *U-bhabha a-li-limaa lelo U-Mayu a-lihamba mbegu*
 PS-father Ps-FUT-dig conj PS-mother Ps-plant seeds
 'The father is digging but the mother is planting seeds'

In 12, we observe that the conjunction *lelo* has joined two independent clauses, namely *U Ng'walimu* 'the teacher' who is writing and *U Ng'wanafunzi* 'the student' who is also writing (see 12a). The same behaviour has been applied in 8b, whereby *U bhabha* 'the father' and *U Mayu* 'the mother' are conjoined. However, the conjunction *lelo* is sometimes written and pronounced as *leluu* in first speech, especially when the preceding personal pronoun is the second person singular *-u-*. Thus, phonologically, there is juxtaposition between the vowel /o/ and its preceding prefix suffix agreement /u/, resulting in a lengthened /uu or u:/. See in 13 below:

13. *U-bhabha a-li-limaa leluu U-Mayu a-lihamba mbegu*
 PS-father Ps-FUT-dig conj-PS-mother Ps-plant seeds
 'The father is digging but the mother is planting seeds'

The data in 13 exemplifies juxtaposition, in which the two vowel sounds coalesce and emerge as one sound. In other words, when the two sounds are combined, one sound is eliminated while the second is lengthened to compensate for the one that has been lost. Thus, between [o] and [u], it is the [u] sound that is lengthened to make up for the [o] sound. However, the semantic content of these forms of conjunctions is multifaceted from a Kisukuma perspective, given that the meaning of conjunction does not solely refer to the semantic value of an expression but also encompasses a wide range of other semantically related issues, including the pragmatic aspects of meaning.

Subordinating conjunctions

Hanuma nu or na: *Hanuma* is a spatial conjunction in the Kisukuma language of Tanzania. This type of conjunction conceptually functions as an adverbial of place, but in reality, it serves as a



conjunction. *Hanuma'* so receives either *thenu* or *na* conjunctions depending on the subjectconcord prefix agreement. The former is attracted by the singular prefix suffix agreement *U*, while the latter is attracted by the prefix suffix agreement *bha*, meaning 'they'. See the data in 14 below:

14. (a) *U-Dakitali a-koga hanuma nu U-nke*
 PS-Doctor PS-wash conj PRPS-wife
 'The Doctor washed so did his wife'
- (b) *U-laisi-wíza hanuma na-bha Bhunge*
 PS-President conj 2Pr-MPs Prime.minister
 'The President came so did his Prime minister'

The conjunctions in 14 (a-b) are compound ones that join two groups of structures. In other words, compound conjunctions connect subordinate clauses with superordinate clauses in syntactic structures. Similarly, Quirk and Greenbaum (2004, p. 313) consider such groups of words as compound subordinators. They are compound items that function, to varying degrees, like a single conjunction.

The data in 14 contradict Thobias (2013), who presented *Ha numa* as a preposition. It is important to note that words are not formulas, as in mathematics; the same word can be used in different contexts to convey varying semantic scopes. This is why the contemporary Theory of Metaphor is relevant to this form of words, as articulated from the secondary data. See 15 below:

15. *Jane a-li-ha-numa ya Numba*
 Jane 3PS-PRES-back PREP house
 Jane is at the back of the house (Thobias, 2013, p. 33)

The author argued that *Ha-numa* means 'at the back'; it is a combination of the preposition *ha-* (at) and the adverbial *-numa* 'back side'. He posits that this preposition is used to express the location of varying entities concerning one another in a sentence. It mediates between the located object and its reference subject. It should be noted that Thobias applied the denotative senses of these words as specimens in the laboratory, utilising Schema Theory. The current study offers a different explanation by employing Relevance Theory, as the greater the positive cognitive effects achieved through processing an input, the greater the relevance of that input to the individual at that time. Therefore, the structure 'Jane is at the back' indicates a directional place; thus, the addition of *na* or *nu* (Cf.14) differentiates the expected semantics and outcomes of relevance.

Hanumahangi: Hanumahangi is another conjunction in the language being discussed. It is a compound conjunction, known as a complex conjunction. It comprises *Hanuma* and *hangi*, both of which are Sukuma words. Refer to the data in 16 below:

16. (a) *A-ka-pela no hanuma-hangi U-gwa hasi*
 PS-TNS-run-vigorously conj - PS-fall -down
 'She ran vigorously but (she) did fall down'
- (b) *U-Malundi a-ki-bha-hela hanuma.hangi wí-bhiwa*
 PS-Malundi PS-TNS-steal-money conj 2PP-be.stolen
 'Malundi did steal money but also his money was stolen'

The data from 16 structures indicates that the conjunction *hanumahangi* has been used to connect dependent and independent clauses. This is sometimes referred to as a subordinating conjunction in syntax. Nubi (2016, p. 205) stated that subordinating conjunctions are words used to link



subordinate clauses with the main clauses in a complex sentence. The author continues to argue that these forms of conjunction are employed to join clauses of unequal rank. In other words, they are used to join an independent or main (principal) clause with a dependent (subordinate) one that relies on the main clause for meaning and relevance.

Kunguno: This is one of the conjunctions used by native Sukuma speakers. It belongs to the category of subordinating conjunctions, which are used to join one or more clauses: dependent and independent clauses. In the Kisukuma language, *kunguno* can be exemplified as shown in 17 below:

17. (a) *U-Neema a-ki -bhisa kunguno U-ngoshi a-ta-lipile I-hela* PS-
 Neema Ps- PST-hide conj PS-husband Ps-FUT-pay PS-money
 'Neema did hide herself because her husband didn't pay money'
- (b) *U-Ng'wenyekiti a-ka-tindwakulwa.nguno U nina-wa li-laisi*
 Ps-chairperson fail-conj PS mother TENS-president
 'The chairperson didn't win because his mother was a president'

In (17), the conjunctions *kunguno* and *kulwanguno* are semantically employed to join clauses, akin to the English phrases 'as a result of this' or 'because of this,' to name but a few. This implies that (Cf.17a) the subject 'Neema' concealed herself because her husband had never settled the debts of others. The figurative semantics of *kunguno* and *kulwanguno* (see Lavie, 1995; Wilson, 2009) is directly reflected in the relevance framework, as it has been suggested that relevance theory is principled in supporting, reinforcing, contradicting, and ruling out existing assumptions, which are inferential in producing positive conclusions.

Hamo: This is one of the Sukuma conjunctions that acts as a subordinating connector. Quirk and Greenbaum (1985, p. 309) noted that subordination represents a non-symmetrical relationship, existing between two clauses in which one is a constituent or part of the other. Huddleston (1988, p. 194) argued that, unlike coordination, subordination implies inequality; this refers to a relationship between a dependent (the subordinate element) and a head (the superordinate element). This is evidenced in 18 below:

18. (a) *U-Nkwabhi a-tu-tinda hamo a-some-gete*
 PS-Nkwabhi Ps-FUT-PASS conj(unless) PS- study-hard
 'Nkwabhi won't pass unless she studies hard'
- (b) *Hamo a-some-gete U-Nkwabhi a-tu-tinda*
 Conj PS-study-hard PS-Nkwabhi Ps-FUT-pass
 'Unless he studies hard Nkwabhi won't pass'
- (c) *U-Ng'wenyekiti a-tu-bhita hamo a-honge hela*
 PS-chairperson Ps-FUT-win conj PS-pay money
 'The chairperson will not win unless he pays money'

The data in 18 (a-c) indicates that '*hamo*' is a subordinating conjunction that connects two types of clauses, namely dependent and independent clauses. Note that this form of conjunction sometimes functions adverbially, as it can appear anywhere within the sentence structure. In other words, a subordinating conjunction can be positioned at the beginning or in the middle of a sentence. According to Sahebkeir & Aidinlou (2014, p. 125), subordinating conjunctions are also referred to as *transitional conjunctions*. This terminology arises from the fact that it draws attention before the complete clause or subordinate clause is articulated or expressed.

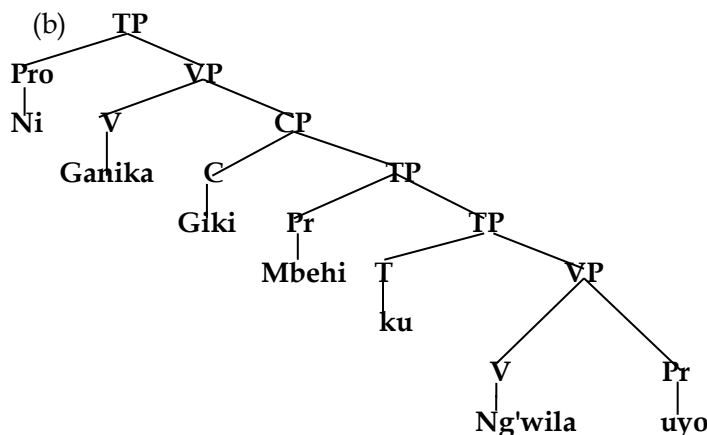


The data in 18 is based on relevance theory, particularly the cognitive principle of relevance (cf. Sperber, 1994a). Here, the theory links the greatest cognitive effects, such as confirmation and conclusion, while considering relevance contexts. Thus, 18(c) provides sufficient information to be effectively understood by the listeners. This is the communicative principle of relevance theory, which contributes relevant and useful information among interlocutors.

Giki: Giki is a type of subordinating conjunction in the Kisukuma language. It is used to join clauses of unequal rank. In other words, it connects an independent (or main) clause with a dependent (or subordinate) clause that relies on the main clause for its meaning and relevance. While the main clause can stand alone and does not depend on the subordinate clause, the subordinate clause cannot stand alone. Occasionally, subordinating conjunctions are referred to as complex conjunctions due to their role in joining clauses of unequal rank (Unibi, 2016, p. 205). Consider the tree structure in 19 below:

- 19 (a) Ni Ganika-giki U-mbehia ku-Ng'wila-U yo
 I think-conj PS-man PS-Inf-say -PS him
 'I think that the man will tell him'

The data in 19(a) illustrates the complementiser *giki*, which enhances the rest of the syntactic structure for easier processing of its meaning. This structure operates seamlessly within the Sukuma speech community, as relevance theory suggests that individuals comprehend information by focusing on situational efficiency. Here, the complementiser draws the listener's attention, allowing them to process information based on maximally relevant details.



The figure in 19 (b) illustrates that a subordinating conjunction has established an environment for subordination; this can be justified within the framework of the *Extended Projection Principle*, which states that 'a finite tense constituent T must extend into a TP projection containing a subject.' In other words, the grammatical properties of words are described in terms of sets of grammatical features. We can assert that tense auxiliaries such as 'are' carry an *Extended Projection Principle* feature requiring them to have an extended projection into a tense projection (TP) that includes a subject (Radford, 2004). However, with regard to conceptual meaning, the lexeme 'giki' serves as the head word; in other words, all meanings of either preceding or following words are mapped onto the lexeme 'giki.' 'Giki' is metaphorical as it can imply 'trying,' 'direction,' or 'sampling.' The data in 19 provides us with brief yet clear information; this aligns with the notion proposed by Unger (2006) that the effective message to be understood does not necessitate a lot of information but rather a few concise



elements for easier cognitive effects trade-off. Therefore, the structure in 19 (a) does not require excessive effort to comprehend, and thus it is more relevant.

Conclusions

The paper aimed to describe the syntactic features of Kisukuma conjunctions, captured through two objectives: coordinating and subordinating conjunctions in the Kémunasukuma dialect of Kisukuma. Importantly, the first objective revealed that the Kémunasukuma dialect of the Kisukuma language is rich in coordinating conjunctions, including *na*, *nu*, *nulu*, *ila*, *lelo*, *leluu*, and *lakini*. Similarly, the second research objective demonstrated that the Kémunasukuma dialect contains subordinating conjunctions, such as *hanuma nu*, *hanumana*, *hanumahangi*, *kunguno*, *kulwanguno*, *hamo*, and *giki*. These data were explained within the framework of Relevance Theory, which highlights the interaction of human cognition (maximisation of relevance) and communication, often regarded as relevant. These forms of conjunction are significant in the Kisukuma language, as they are employed to conjoin ideas into complete communicative facts. This work significantly contributes to syntactic word categories, specifically conjunctions, and to the field of linguistics in general. The data from Kisukuma have illustrated peculiarities in the application of Relevance Theory, there by proving the role of Bantu languages in contributing to and strengthening the development of linguistic theory. Furthermore, the study focused strictly on syntactic and semantic descriptions of conjunctions in the Kémunasukuma dialect of the Kisukuma language. Additional studies could examine other forms that share the same grammatical categories, such as determiners, auxiliaries, and pronouns. This would provide an analytical grammar of Kisukuma that can be understood across generations.

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