
Differential marking in the Bantu language Kinande

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In this talk we present newly-discovered data involving differential marking in the Bantu language Kinande (spoken in the Democratic Republic of the Congo). Differential marking is when the same grammatical function, such as direct or indirect object, is morphologically distinguished in certain instances. We discuss three patterns. First, objects are differentially marked in predicative possession constructions: If the object refers to something that can be held in the hand (1a&b), it must be preceded by a locative marker (a common morpho-syntactic strategy for differential marking cross-linguistically, Bossong 1991, 1998, a.o.) . But if it cannot be held in the hand (2a&b), no locative marker precedes it. Crucially, the presence of locative morphology *does not* entail a locative interpretation in these constructions.

(1) a. * <i>Kambale a-wite kitabu.</i> Kambale 3SG-have 7book 'Kambale has a book.'	(2) a. <i>Kambale a-wite enyumba.</i> Kambale 3SG-have 9house 'Kambale has a house.'
b. <i>Kambale a-wite oko kitabu.</i> Kambale 3SG-have 17 LOC 7book 'Kambale has a book.'	b. * <i>Kambale a-wite oko enyumba.</i> Kambale 3SG-have 17LOC 9house 'Kambale has a house.'

We found two additional classes of constructions where there is differential marking in Kinande: a) when there are goals and sources in the sentence; and b) when there is external possession. We explore the properties of these three constructions and demonstrate that certain structural conditions must hold in the syntax in order for the specially marked nominals to occur in the sentence. Thus, one of the important conclusions we draw is that Kinande differential marking has a syntactic nature, as opposed to being just a morphological phenomenon.