

Robert Botne (with Hannington Ochwada and Michael Marlo)

2006. A Grammatical Sketch of the Lusaamia Verb. Rüdiger Köppe Verlag: Köln. Grammatische Analysen afrikanischer Sprachen Band 30. X + 186 Seiten, 1 Karte, 3 Tabellen, zahlreiche Übersichten, Index, Format: 24 x 16 mm, € 34,80

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Lusaamia (*Ólusaamya*) is spoken in western Kenya and eastern Uganda. It belongs to the Luluyia dialect cluster and is classified as E.34 in Guthrie's (1967-71) zone classification and J.34 in the Tervuren (1978) revision of Guthrie. Related dialects are Bukusu, Lutsootso, Lukisa, Lulogooli, and Lunyole spoken in Kenya. Only a few articles have been written on this language. They deal with specific tonological, phonological and morphological issues such as reduplication or segmental duration.

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The grammatical sketch is the result of a successful cooperation of Robert Botne with the Ph.D. students Hannington Ochwada and Michael Marlo. The main consultant for the data analysis was Hannington Ochwada who comes from Busia, a town near the Kenya-Uganda border. Because so little work on the grammatical structure of this language has been published this first more comprehensive overview is highly welcome and appreciated.

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The sketch is subdivided into three parts: Part I "Sketch of the verb", Part II "Saying and texts", and Part III "Lexicon of Lusaamia verb stems" which contains about 700 different verb stems Lusaamia-English and English-Lusaamia. The brief introduction includes a map of the Lusaamia area and a bibliography containing the linguistic literature on Lusaamia and related dialects. Appendix A gives the reference verb template, Appendix B contains two sample verb conjugations, the paradigm of the activity verb *oxu-xina* 'dance' and the achievement verb *oxu-fwa* 'die'. An index of linguistic terms can be found at the end.

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Part I is organised in a very unusual way. It begins with four small chapters on aspect: Aktionsarten I and II, grammatical aspect and lexical aspect. The next small chapters deal with copulas, infinitive and compound constructions, conditional clauses, the reflexive prefix *-ee*, extensions, imperative, infinitival complements, infinitives, jussive, modality and modal verbs, negation, *ni*-constructions, person and number inflection. The phonology part on consonants and vowels precedes the chapters on post-final locative and partitive clitics, reduplication, relative verb forms, root and radical, structure of the verbal word, subjunctive, syllable structure, tense and tenor, tone and voice extensions. It took me quite a long time to find out that all these small chapters are ordered alphabetically. Thus, this was the reason why

the overview of the verb structure is not given - as would be expected - at the beginning of the grammatical sketch but on page 90 almost at the end of the main part. This unusual way of organising the chapters should at least be mentioned somewhere in the introduction to prevent the reader from being puzzled about the organisation of the book. However, this remark could have already been given by an attentive editor before publishing the volume.

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The complex agglutinating verb structure which is typical for Bantu languages can also be found in Lusaamia. Morphological elements may precede or follow the verb root or radical. The preceding elements are the pre-initial clitics *ni* and *si*, the subject prefixes, tense and mood markers, the reflexive marker *-ee-* and the object markers. Post-radical elements comprise verb extensions, aspect markers, voice changing suffixes, final inflectional elements and post-final locative, partitive and adverbial clitics. The formally most simple verb form is the unmarked present consisting of the subject (and object) marker and the verb stem followed by a high-toned *à*. The more complex verb phrase consists of combinations of various pre- and post-radical elements whose occurrence are conditioned by several constraints.

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The elements are subdivided into tense and tenor marking elements and markers of aspect and aktionsarten. Tense marking elements include the future and the past tense. They are located in the so-called D-domain and cannot co-occur with tenor marking elements located in the P-domain, where "the deictic center (anchored at S) occurs within time span of the reference frame [inclusion] (96)". The so-called perfective aspect *-ir-e* belongs to the tenor marking elements. Botne does not make a distinction between perfect and perfective. However, the definition "denotes a post-nuclear (N) phase perspective on the event (E)" fulfills the post-time reference criterion of the perfect (cf. Klein 1974: 109) and would correspond to a post-terminal viewpoint operator in the aspect theory of Johanson (2000). Similarly, "current relevance" is considered a typical perfect feature by Anderson (1982). The imperfective aspect *-ngV* comprises the functions progressive, habitual and generic and allows the combination with tense marking elements. The use of term 'Aktionsart' is a controversial issue in linguistic theory (Sasse 1991). Botne (9) defines 'Aktionsarten' taking the German plural suffix *-en* as follows: "Aktionsarten denote the way actions proceed or have been carried out, referring to temporal phases of the action". Aktionsarten I include the persistive prefix *-sii-* and the completive prefix *-aa-*. The persistive denotes continuation of the action and conveys the meaning of the adverbial *still*. The completive indicates that the event progressed to a culminative end. Aktionsarten II comprises several aspectual auxiliary verbs such as *-ich-* 'come', *aanj* 'start', and *lex* 'stop'. The term 'lexical aspect' refers to the three semantic verb classes in Lusaamia: activities, achievements and statives.

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The sketch provides a solid data base of the Lusaamia verb structure containing many examples with brief functional descriptions. This grammatical overview is very useful for typologists and everybody else who is interested in Bantu verb structure. However, Botne's theoretical framework is one of the most innovative and challenging at the moment, so that it is a pity to find the whole verb system scattered into several brief chapters which appear in alphabetical order. Thus, a more comprehensive description of the tense aspect system including the interaction of the different elements would be highly recommendable.

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