

Abstract:

This work strives to account for ergative construction traits in Dholuo. It does this by comparing elements of Dholuo Syntax and Morphology to that of Shilluk and Pari which are sister languages to Dholuo. Shilluk and Pari have been chosen for this comparative study because there is Linguistic Evidence that they exhibit ergative constructions. The study adopts a typological theoretical background and bases its arguments on the fact that; if ergative constructions are evident in other Nilotic Languages, then there is a strong likelihood that such constructions are present in Dholuo. The first chapter is an introductory paragraph. It gives background information to the study and to the languages to be used for comparison purposes in this study i.e. Shilluk and Pari. The chapter also outlines the development of the study together with the theoretical background. Chapter two provides information on a typological study. It outlines the various parameters that are commonly used by linguists. An appropriate parameter for the study is chosen in this chapter. In chapter three, we discuss the various ergative constructions evident in the three languages. The chapter begins by looking at the constituent order of Shilluk, Pari and Dholuo. This aims at establishing the pattern in which the constituents' are arranged i.e. either in an accusative or an ergative manner. Secondly, the chapter looks at derived constructions like the passive and antipassive. The chapter finally looks at the patterns in which pronominal affixes are attached to the verb. Chapter four is an analysis of questionnaires given to twenty Dholuo speakers on passive constructions. These questionnaires test the use of the morpheme 'gi' in passive constructions Chapter five outlines the findings of the study. General conclusions are then drawn from these findings.