

Abstract

Title: A linguistic description of Kagulu
Swedish title: En språklig beskrivning av Kagulu
Author: Malin Petzell
Language: English
Department: Oriental and African Languages, Göteborg University

This PhD thesis consists of a linguistic description of the Kagulu language. Kagulu is a Bantu language, classified as G12 following the Bantu language tradition. It is spoken in Tanzania, inland from Dar es Salaam, by approximately 240,000 people. Kagulu was fairly undescribed before this work, and there is little information about the language. The most extensive source of Kagulu so far is not linguistic, but anthropological.

All the Kagulu data was collected by the author in the area in which Kagulu is spoken in Tanzania. This was done chiefly by the method of linguistic elicitation, including distributing questionnaires and carrying out interviews. Spontaneous speech was also recorded for grammatical analysis.

The relation between the Kagulu language and its sociocultural context, i.e. the sociolinguistics, is sketched in the introduction. The data stems from a sociolinguistic survey carried out in Kagulu schools. The survey answered questions on what position Kagulu holds in society, current tendencies of language competence and use, and general attitudes towards minority languages in Tanzania.

The grammatical description that follows focuses on morphology. However, a prerequisite for describing the morphology of a previously undocumented language is to analyse the sounds and decide how to depict them (i.e. orthography). For that reason, this work begins with a brief phonological sketch including a sound inventory. The morphology of the noun and verb constitutes the bulk of the thesis. The noun phrase and its constituents are described in depth, alongside the verb phrase with its complex agglutinating morphology. The syntax chapter examines some basic questions about Kagulu word order and different types of clauses.

The theoretical framework used in this work is that of Basic Linguistic Theory. This theory aims at describing each language on its own terms, focusing on the language facts, and it avoids using theory-specific terminology. It is basically the cumulative tradition of linguistic theory up to the present day.

Lastly, some Kagulu texts can be found. The texts were recorded in the Kagulu area and later transcribed, segmented and glossed. They represent everyday speech exhibiting most of the issues dealt with in this work.

Keywords: Bantu, Tanzanian languages, grammar, morphology, linguistic description, endangered language