

**A CARTOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF KĪMŪTHAMBĪ CLAUSE STRUCTURE**

**DIANA KANANU KABURO**

**A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School in Partial Fulfillment for the Requirements  
for the Award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Linguistics of Chuka University**

**CHUKA UNIVERSITY**

**OCTOBER 2024**

## DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

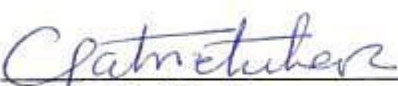
### Declaration

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for an award of diploma or conferment of degree in any other University.

Signature:  \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 11/10/2024  
Diana Kananu Kaburo  
AD13/35745/18

### Recommendation

This thesis has been examined, passed and submitted with our approval as University supervisors.

Signature:  \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 14/10/2024  
Dr. Claudius P. Kihara  
Chuka University

Signature:  \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 11/10/2024  
Prof. Mary Karuri  
Tharaka University



## **COPYRIGHT**

©2024

All rights reserved. No part of this thesis may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means: electronic, mechanical, photocopy and recorded or otherwise without prior written permission from the author or Chuka University.

## **DEDICATION**

To my mum Florence Kaburo. You are a great pillar in my life, my constant reminder of what is the true meaning of determination, strength, resilience and amazing love and kindness. You are my role model and I know how proud you are of me. To my children Jasmine and Jaden. May you grow up with determination, strength and resilience to pursue your dreams.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank and acknowledge the Almighty God for enabling the success of this work in every applicable sense and for providing me strength, energy and understanding in doing this work. To Him alone be all the glory.

My heartfelt gratitude goes to my supervisors Dr. Patrick Kihara and Prof. Mary Karuri. Thanks for your tireless guidance and insightful feedback that greatly helped in shaping this work. I thank you especially for prodding me to work harder when my pace slackened and for always reminding me that I needed to pursue this work relentlessly.

Nonetheless, I exonerate them from any misanalysis or errors in this dissertation

Let me also express gratitude Prof. Humphrey Kirimi, Dr. Christine Atieno and Prof. Nancy Mbaka for constantly reminding me that I needed to complete this work and graduate. I appreciate your concern and may God always bless you

Many thanks to my family for your unwavering support. To my husband Anderson, I could not accomplish this without your emotional, social, mental and especially financial support. May the Lord reward you for me and allow you to accomplish your dreams. To my children Jasmine and Jayden, thanks for your love and support and forgive any moments of inattention during this period. To my mum, thanks for always reminding me that I could achieve everything I wanted to; to this day you are still my role model.

I also wish to thank my fellow student Lilly, for the constant encouragement, push, rebuke, prayers and even pep talks. Walking this journey with you was rewarding and comforting. May God bless you.

Lastly, I would to thank my friends and family members who kept on reminding me that they had a graduation party to attend and they could not wait for it. Thanks for giving me the push to work hard.

## ABSTRACT

Conventional analysis of the clause structure and clausal domains do not provide detailed information about the functional projections of the clausal domain, nor do they provide the architecture of constituents that appear in such constructions. In contrast, such details are apparent in the Cartography of Syntax approach as posited by Rizzi (1997) and subsequent work. This study analyzed the clause structure of Kĩmũthambĩ, a central Kenya Bantu language spoken in Tharaka-Nithi, Kenya. The study was guided by the Cartography of Syntax; an approach that provides a detailed hierarchical nature account of constituents in left periphery of the clause. The study analysed the structure of the simple clause, conditional and temporal complex sentences in Kĩmũthambĩ, with the main focus being on the structure of the left peripheries. Existing literature revealed that rarity of studies on clausal and sentential aspects of the various dialects of the Meru group. Cartographic studies of the left periphery in African languages exist but they are more concentrated on the western Africa Bantu languages and Chadic languages. Thus, this study set out to investigate how cartography of syntax can account for the mapping of constituents in a central Kenya Bantu language. The study is descriptive in approach. Data was sourced from naturally occurring and spontaneous discourse in natural settings. In addition, data was collected using a structure translation exercise administered to language consultants and the researcher's intuition. Analysis of data was done by first analysing the structure of Kĩmũthambĩ simple clause and aspects of the left periphery. It was demonstrated that Kĩmũthambĩ left periphery has various functional projections and has the basic structure of ForceP-InterP-TopP-FocP-ModPFinP. As is cross linguistically common, complementizer *ati* 'that' has strong declarative features and *kana* 'if/whether' with strong interrogative feature. Semantically, complementizer *ati* is also a dubitative particle especially when it occurs with interrogative sentences. Movement of focus and topic constituents to the left periphery is as a result of the need mark [+focus] features at the Foc head position and [+topic] features at Top head position. The study concluded that syntactic elements that manifest in left periphery adhere to the cartographic analysis of the left periphery as postulated by Rizzi (1997). Furthermore, the study analyzed conditional and temporal clauses in the language and found out that they have an elaborate left periphery though not as elaborate as that of the simple clause. This research contributes to the study of Kĩmũthambĩ language which has little theoretical research attention. The study also contributes to the study of clause structure in Bantu languages which in turn adds to the body of knowledge on Bantu syntax and generally to linguistic studies in African languages.

