

The locative-subject alternation in Xhosa: lexical aspect and the (de-)causative distinction in motion verb constructions

Marianna Visser
(University of Stellenbosch)

The properties of locative-subject alternation constructions with motion verbs will be explored in various Southern African Bantu languages. In particular, the correlation between locative-subject inversion and properties exemplifying the causative-anti-causative distinction in these constructions will be examined in isiXhosa, Northern Sotho (Sepedi) and Tshivenda. A range of diagnostics relating to aspectual verb class properties associated with (anti-)causative properties will be applied to sentence constructions that exemplify the locative-subject alternation in Southern Bantu. These diagnostics include the acceptability of various temporal, manner and instrumental adverbials, and reason clauses. The examples examined raise a number of questions concerning the characterization of transitivity in the Southern Bantu languages.