

A. The Problem. The Bantu language Kinande has a particle called the *linker* (Mutaka 1986) that occurs between arguments of the verb and sometimes also between arguments of the verb and adjuncts. The linker (LK) agrees in noun class with the DP that immediately precedes it:

(1) a. Jacky aha ekitabú kyo Nadine Jacky gave 7book 7LK Nadine 'Jacky gave the book to Nadine.'	b. Jacky aha Nadine y' ekitabú Jacky gave 1Nadine 1LK' book 'Jacky gave Nadine a book.'
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Baker and Collins (2006) propose that the purpose of the linker is to license the Case of a following nominal expression in the verb phrase. One of the reasons they are led to their Case theoretic solution is because the linker does not occur if there is just a single internal argument, as in (2), but does occur if there are two internal arguments (1):

(2)a. *Kambale agula ekitabú <i>kyo</i> K. 3s.buy book.7 LK.7	b. *Kambale agula <i>kyo</i> ekitabú Kambale 3s.buy LK.7 book.7	c. Kambale agula ekitabú Kambale 3s.buy book.7 'Kambale bought the book.'
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However, a Case theoretic solution cannot be entirely correct as demonstrated by the new observation that the linker can be followed by adverbs and other expressions whose distribution is not regulated by Case:

(3)a. Kámبالé átuma ebarúhá yó lubálúba Kambale sent 9letter 9LK quickly 'Kambale sent the letter quickly.'	b. abana mobakaya okokalasi ko ba-tya 2children 2went 17school 17LK thus 'The children went to school thus (e.g. without eating)'
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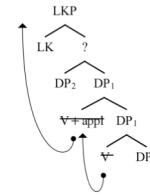
These data indicate that the other approach to the linker in the literature, namely Richards (2009, 2010), also falls short. Richards proposes that the distribution of the linker is regulated by a condition he calls *distinctness*. Under Richards' approach, the linker occurs because two noun phrases within the same spell out domain are too similar to each other for the grammar to linearize them—they both bear the label DP. For the grammar to resolve this, Richards conjectures that the phrase headed by the linker provides a phase boundary when there are two DPs such that one DP is spelled out in the domain of the phase and the other is spelled out in the higher phase. However, if *distinctness* in Kinande cares only about labels, then the same examples that show Baker and Collins' (2006) Case theoretic proposal is empirically wrong (3) also show that Richards' (2009, 2010) *distinctness* account cannot work to account for the linker in Kinande. This is because the examples in (3) involve XPs with distinct labels: DP and AdvP. Since the labels are distinct, the linker phrase should not occur in these examples; nonetheless, it does.

B. The Proposal. I propose, together with Richards, that the linker plays a role in linearization. However, I analyze the challenge to linearization in these constructions as being one involving the labeling of symmetrically merged XPs (Chomsky 2013), rather than identical labels. I demonstrate that symmetry exists in constructions marked by the linker if, as Chomsky (2013) argues, the labels of phrases are determined by a Labeling Algorithm (LA) based on minimal search. I assume Chomsky's (2013) extension of Moro's dynamic antisymmetry such that movement alters a syntactic object so that the syntactic object can be labeled. The linker provides a super-ordinate position that can be targeted by one of the XPs to break the underlying point of symmetry. I demonstrate that linkers head constructions involving semantic predication. I also establish that the linker has properties of a copula. More specifically, it behaves like a *linker* in the sense of Den Dikken (2006). *Linkers* in Den Dikken's sense are involved in copular predicate inversion constructions. Following Hedberg (1988, 2007) they create a topic-focus structure.

Therefore, I propose that the particular type of symmetry breaking that linkers are involved in results in copular (inversion) constructions.

LA projects a label based on minimal search. Results of the LA are indicated below. When there is symmetry, movement removes an object from consideration for labeling, what remains is projected.

This tree illustrates that given a high applicative construction and one additional XP within the verb phrase, after the movement of heads, a point of symmetry, indicated by the question mark for a label, exists with respect to the two XPs:



C. The Evidence. Copular inversion structures have the following properties that linker constructions share:

- i) Only post *inverted copular*/post linker position can carry contrastive focus.

(4) a. The culprit is JOHN; b. *The CULPRIT is John

(5) a. aha'ekitabu **kyo** banda ; b. *aha banda **b'**ekitabu
 gave 7book 7LK CHILDREN gave 2CHILDREN 2LK'book
 'He gave the book to the CHILDREN (not to the adults).'
- ii) The linker and equative/specificational copula are morphologically identical in Kinande

(6) a. agulira Barack Obama **y'**ekitabu (linker)
 3sg.buy.appl B. O. 1LK'7book
 'He bought Barack Obama a book.'

 b. Barack Obama **y'** omupresident (equative copular)
 1Barack Obama 1LK 1president
 'Barack Obama is the president.'

 c. omupresident **yo** Barack Obama (specificational copular)
 1president 1LK 1Barack Obama
 'The president is Barack Obama.'
- iii) Adjectives cannot invert in copular inversion constructions and adverbials cannot invert in linker constructions, even when they have phi-features.

(7)a. Mary is beautiful. b. *beautiful is Mary.

(8)a. watuma ekitabu **ky'**eyo b. *watuma eyo **y'**ekitabu
 2sg-send 7book 7LK'20there 2sg-send 20there 20LK'book
 'You sent the book there.'
- iv) Copular inversion constructions are immune to Minimal Link Condition (MLC) effects and so are linker constructions. Baker & Collins (2006) specifically propose that the MLC does not hold in linker constructions in Kinande.

(9) John is the culprit → The culprit is [John is the culprit]

(10) agulira [LK Marya [~~y'~~ ekitabu] → agulira [Marya LK Marya [~~y'~~ ekitabu]
 3sg.buy.appl LK Mary appl -buy- 7book
 agulira [LK Marya [~~y'~~ ekitabu] → agulira [ekitabu LK Marya [~~y'~~ ekitabu]
 'He bought a book for Mary.' 3sg.buy.appl book LK Mary appl -buy- book

Selected References:

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