

The applicative and the focalization of Event Location in Rundi (Bantu JD62)

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In the Eastern Great Lakes Bantu language Rundi (JD62), the *-ir* reflex of the polyfunctional and semantically underspecified Proto-Bantu applicative suffix **-ɪd* is more often than not the only morphological means to introduce peripheral semantic roles into a main clause, as is the case elsewhere in Bantu. Although seldom discussed, discourse-related functions of PB **-ɪd* are also common in Kirundi, and in Bantu more generally. Using a combination of corpus and elicited data, we present two virtually undescribed discourse functions of applicative *-ir* in Rundi. First, we show that *-ir* is used with a specific group of verb roots to make Event Location applied phrases accessible to focalization. In this usage, the applicative co-occurs with information-structure morphology known in Bantu studies as the conjoint/disjoint alternation. Depending on the presence or absence of conjoint vs. disjoint, on the applicative, and on the context, different types of focus can be assigned to Event Location applied phrases and/or the immediately preceding verb. Second, we show that the applicative can widen the scope of an Event Location applied phrase from involving the object of a transitive verb root to involving also the subject of that transitive verb root. Finally, we elaborate on the historical implications of this synchronic situation.