Appraisal of Kenyang noun classification from the spell-outs of subject markers

Florence A. E. Tabe Oben
University of Yaoundé I

This paper explores the structure of Kenyang (a Niger-Congo language of the Nyang group spoken in Mamfe, South West Cameroon) grammatical agreement in order to narrow down the possible alternatives in the identification of noun classes. Previous studies in this domain sparsely specify the number of noun classes in the language. However, the studies that do seem to indicate considerable diversity and redundancy in the number of classes attested in Kenyang. The paper argues that the spell-outs of the subject markers (agreement and aspectual features) can be examined insightfully in a way that elucidates the number of noun classes that exist in the language alongside its prefixal morphology. Further, it indicates how the tone patterns hosted by the subject markers play a supportive role in distinguishing the noun classes in the Kenyang language.