Null Subject in Lubukusu and the Extended Projection Principle

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Abstract

This paper analyses the null subject phenomenon in Lubukusu with special reference to the extended projection principle (EPP). The paper looks at conditions under which null subjects are allowed in this language. Lubukusu data is self-generated and the analysis is based on the principles and parameters approach (P&P) and the Minimalist program (MP). From the analysis of the data generated, it is shown that null subjects in Lubukusu are syntactically active categories. Though covert, they are Arguments that carry semantic content, hence satisfying the EPP requirements. Null subjects occur in this language because of its rich morphology; that is, whenever the subject agreement features are marked on the verb or any of the determiners, then the overt subject can be dropped without any negative implication on the grammaticality of the structure. Being an Argument position, it is theta-marked and as such the unpronounced null subject is pro (a pronoun). This being the case, it is argued that Lubukusu is a consistent null subject language and that in null subject constructions, the EPP is observed.

Keywords: EPP, Lubukusu, Null subject, Subject agreement markers, Pro.

1. Introduction

Lubukusu is a Luhya dialect of the Bantu group that is predominantly spoken in the Western parts of Kenya, alongside other Luhya dialects like Lulogooli, Lwisukha, Lunyala, Lukabras, Lutachoni, Luwanga, Lwidakho, Lunyore, Lusamia, Lukhayo, Lumarachi, Lutiriki, Lumarama, Lutsotso, Lushisa. Guthrie (1967-1971) classifies Lubukusu as belonging to Zone E30C, while Lewis (2009) (who has reclassified Lubukusu as a language) says that it belongs to Zone J30. On the other hand, Maho (2008) has reclassified the same as belonging to JE31C. Lubukusu like other Bantu languages predominantly follows the subject-verb-objet (SVO) word pattern, with the inflection heading the sentence. Being an agglutinating language, Lubukusu is morphologically rich and this is what makes it possible to drop the subject without any negative implication on its syntax.

A null   is that which allows the omission of an overt subject in the clause. This is a language that has the person, number and/ or gender agreement features marked on some other element and as such, the explicit realization of the subject is considered redundant. Lubukusu being a null subject language, the occurrence of the overt subject pronoun is only f or emphasis; otherwise it can always be dropped as its semantics can be inferred from the context.

So far, there are studies that have been done on the null subject parameter in many languages (see Chomsky 1981, Rizzi 1982 & 1986 and Baker 1988). However, these studies are mainly based on European languages like Italian, Spanish, German e. t. c. Likewise; there are studies that have been done on the null subject in some Bantu languages like Zulu, Kinyarwanda, Sotho, Sesotho and Agham, (See Kimenyi 1980, Demuth 1990, Marten 2000, Buell 2005, Zerbian 2005 and Hyman 2000)**.**   On the other hand, Diercks (2010 & 2011) has done quite some tremendous work on agreement in Lubukusu, which the current study builds on. In Diercks' (2010) PhD Dissertation, the author investigates 'Agreement with subject in Lubukusu', examining locative inversion, complementizer agreement and alternative agreement in subject extraction constructions. In the discussion of the three elements, focus is on directionality in probe-goal relations, thereby agreeing with Baker's (2008) hypothesis that heads probe upwards in Bantu structures.

Likewise, Diercks (2011) focuses on the locative in Lubukusu. In this work, the author argues that repeated agreement locative inversion has two distinct verbal affixes which, i)   agrees with the fronted locative phrase and ii) the verb agrees with both the fronted and the post-verbal subject in disjoint agreement locative inversion. This, according to the author contradicts the upward agreement hypothesis as claimed by Baker (2008).

Also related to the current study is Diercks' (2013) work on 'Indirect Agree in Lubukusu Complementizer Agreement'*,* where the author observes that a declarative-embedding complementizer agrees in an upward orientation with the subject of its selecting clause. In the discussion of the same, the conclusion given is that the complementizer in Lubukusu agrees with the most local super-ordinate subject. The author refers to this type of agreement as indirect agreement and not a direct relation. The conclusion is based on the fact that this relation is a result of local agreement between the complementizer and a null-subject-oriented

anaphor (whose antecedent is the super-ordinate subject).

Though scholars have done quite some work on agreement in Lubukusu, the current study specifically looks at the null subject phenomenon by focusing not only the verb as an element that carries the subject marker, thereby making it possible for the overt subject to be dropped but also focus is on the other elements in Lubukusu structures, especially determiners. In this paper it is argued that despite the fact the subject is dropped, EPP is satisfied.

Lubukusu has all the characteristics attributed to null subject languages by Chomsky 1981, which include:

i)   Co-occurrence of null and overt subject pronoun in tensed clauses

ii) Obligatory null expletives

iii) Free subject-verb inversion in simple sentences

iv) The presence of overt complementizer in that-trace contexts

With regard to the EPP, Chomsky (1982: 10) says, "every clause must have a subject occupying the privileged subject position that features in all clauses; that is, SPEC IP/ TP". Being a universal principle, the current study has shown that Lubukusu does obey this principle.

2. Theoretical Framework

The principles and parameters approach (P&P) and the Minimalist programs (MP) have been applied in the current study. The principles and parameter approach was first developed by Chomsky (1980/ 1981). The basic notion in this approach is to make a distinction between properties that are true in human language; that is, principles and those that vary cross-linguistically (the parameters). The assumption in this approach is that parameters are binary-valued and mutually exclusive. Consequently, a language has to make a choice from the two options made available by the universal grammar.

According to the principles and parameters framework, the null subject is controlled by pro drop parameter. This is a parameter that explains why some languages permit subjects of tensed clauses to be null, while others do not. Chomsky (1981) says those languages that permit null subjects contain a phonetically empty, but structurally present subject. Such sentences contain an empty category, pro, which behaves like other pronouns. The principles and parameters framework has been used in this paper to explain how Lubukusu as a null subject language behaves. It is shown that this language marks the person, number and gender agreement features of the noun in the subject position not only on the verb but also on the other elements in the structure; especially, the determiners and because of this, the requirements of the EPP are met. Evidence of the existence of pro (also referred to as little pro) in Lubukusu is captured through the Extended Projection Principle, which demands that every clause must have a subject. Further evidence of the existence of pro is captured through theta criterion, which demands that an argument must have one theta role and each theta role must be assigned to an argument. This principle is observed in the current work in that even

in cases where the subject is not overtly realized, there is a theta role that is assigned to such null subject positions because the assumption is that there is a subject that is present; although implied.

Likewise, the paper makes use of the minimalist program (MP) in explaining the concept of null subject in relation to the EPP. According to the MP, all pros and pro expletives are viewed as being phonologically null counterparts of the overtly realized pronouns. The approach entails SPEC- TP (Specifier- Tense phrase) projection, where the difference between the null subject languages and the non-null subject languages is the composition of the TP, with one being morphologically richer than the other. Based on this approach, pronouns are said to rise to SPEC- TP position, where they are deleted at PF. The approach has been used to explain how the tense phrase bears nominal features, which combines with the verb to ensure that the raised pronoun (subject) bears features that are marked on tense. The assumption is that there is a D- component and there is movement and that the featural properties associated with the functional category tense (T) trigger syntactic movement via feature checking computation. Specifically in Lubukusu, subject markers that are on the verb triggers movement of the subject from the post-verbal to pre-verbal position for feature checking. This applies to finite constructions, where, tense, being marked for [+finite] requires that the nominative is in the subject position and is checked within the TP. Based on this assumption, it is argued in this paper that agree and move are inter-dependent; that is, the presence of agreement features require that some elements move. Consequently, in Lubukusu, elements that determine the agreement on the verb must move and land in a structurally higher position; hence agreement occurs in SPEC-Head relationship. This is in line with Baker's (2008) proposal that in Bantu languages, agreement is upward. As movement takes place; feature checking is done to ensure that EPP requirements are met.

Though studies have been done on Bantu languages and generalizations made, not much has been done on Lubukusu null subject and the EPP using the minimalist approach. The current study intends to contribute to the existing theoretical knowledge.

3. Discussion and Findings

3.1 Null Subjects in Simple Sentences

In Lubukusu, a null subject is an Argument that occurs in a theta-marked (canonical subject position) of a finite clause, not in a non-finite one. The null subject is permitted in this language because:

i) The content of the implied subject can be recovered from the subject agreement features that are marked on the other elements in the structure. For instance:

1)**Alikha**-   fuk-   a.

3sg.cl1.pres   cook   FV

"He/she is cooking'

Though not overtly marked, it is obvious from the structure that the missing AGENT has the

features [+HUMAN, +SG].

ii) The presence of the agreement features on the verb makes the occurrence of the subject redundant; and given that Lubukusu has thematic subjects, their occurrence in structure is not obligatory.

2)*(Maria) alikha*-   fuk-   a.

Mary   3sg.cl1.pres   cook   FV

Lit. Mary she is cooking

"Mary is cooking'.

The semantics of the two structures, with and without the overt subject is similar, so the occurrence of an overt subject does not add any value but instead it is a repetition of what has already been expressed through the subject markers.

iii) The missing subject has pronominal interpretation and the same is captured through the subject agreement features that are marked on the verb.

3)*Niye*   alikha-   fuk-   a.

3sg.cl1   3sg.cl1.pres   cook   FV

"He/she is cooking'.

As observed, a pronoun can occur in the null subject position and its meaning is equivalent to that of the subject marker on the verb; this explains why this position in Lubukusu is analyzed as being occupied by pro.

iv) The presence of the null subject is required by EPP.

According to the EPP, every finite clause must have a subject, so the existence of this position is valid and it must have content, whether overtly marked or not. This condition is met in Lubukusu.

From the illustrations given above, the subject in this language can remain unpronounced. However, despite this, null subject constructions still fulfill the EPP requirement.

Besides, evidence from the Argument structure of verbs show that EPP is observed in Lubukusu null subject constructions. The verb *funa* 'harvest' in the following simple sentence is used for illustration:

-Funa 'harvest' is a verb in Lubukusu that requires two Arguments; that is, the internal and the external one. When this verb functions in a null subject construction, the implied external Argument is assumed to be theta-marked as exemplified below:

4). Pro   alikha-   fun-   a   kama-   indi.

3sg.pres.cl1 harvest   FV   pl. cl6. maize

'He/ she is harvesting maize'.

In 4) above, the element that is not overtly marked is an external Argument and it is assigned the theta role of AGENT, while the internal Argument *kamaindi* 'maize', which is in the object position is assigned the theta role of GOAL. Though pro is phonetically null, its content is understood. This is made possible by the presence of the subject markers on the verb. This being the case, the requirements for EPP are met. Likewise, the theta criterion, (which requires that every Argument bears one and only one theta role and each theta role be assigned to one and only one Argument) is observed.

According to Rizzi (1982), languages that have null subjects; i) allow subjects to appear freely in the post- verbal position as illustrated below:

5) i) Omw-   ana   a-   som-   a.

    sg cl1   child   3sgcl1   read   FV

    'The Child is reading'

ii) A-   som-   a   ***omw-   ana.***

3sgcl1   read   FV   sg cl1   child

 'The Child is reading'

While discussing the subject marker in Bantu languages as an anti-focus marker, Buell (2006) argues that there is lack of subject- verb agreement in subject-verb inversion constructions. This scholar uses examples from Zulu as below:

   6)i) Abafana   ba-   ya-   cul-   a

     boy 2   sm2-   Dis-   sing-   FV

    'The boys are singing'.   Buell 2006: 19

   ii) ku-   cul-   a   abafana

       Expl 17- sing-   FV boy 2

     'The boys are singing'   (Buell 2006: 23)

Unlike Zulu, also a Bantu language, where the occurrence of an expletive marker on the verb (in subject inversion constructions) blocks agreement between the verb and the inverted subject (as the subject marker **ba-** that is marked on the verb in i) does not appear on the verb in ii) above); in Lubukusu, the contrast happens. In Lubukusu subject inversion constructions, the verb agrees with the post verbal subject and there is no expletive marker that is required on the verb. This is illustrated below:

7) pro khe***chi***-   kon- a   ***chi***-   mbusi.

    Pres. Pl. cl10   sleep   FV   pl cl10-   goat

    'Goats are sleeping'.

In 7) above, there is agreement between the verb and the inverted subject. The two agree in

terms of number and class. Consequently, an expletive cannot occur in such structures since there is no morphological or syntactic vacuum.

As much as it is the logical subject that determines the nature of the agreement features that occur on the verb in Lubukusu, there are exceptions. In instances where the subject occurs post-verbally and the locative pre-verbally, instead of the post-verbal subject agreeing with the subject markers on the verb, it is the locative in the pre-verbal position that agrees with the subject markers on the verb as illustrated below:

8)**Mumu**-   saala   **mu-**   li- mo   e-   ndemu.

Loc. sg cl18   tree   Loc. Cl18   V   Loc   sg cl9 snake

'There is a snake in the tree'.

In 8), the subject markers on the verb are determined by the locative in the canonical subject position, as much as it is not the logical subject. Since the locative is from class 18, the agreement markers on the verb are also of class 18. In this structure, the logical subject that now occurs post-verbally has nothing to do with the agreement features that are born by the verb. Likewise, since the locative, which is meant to occur post- verbally has moved to occupy the SPEC- IP position at the S-S, the EPP is observed and as such the occurrence of either pro or an expletive is blocked. Although the English translation has an expletive 'there' for syntactic reasons, the same does not occur in Lubukusu, because there is neither morphological nor syntactic vacuum that demands to be filled by an expletive. Likewise, the verb phrase *mulimo* 'is in' require two Arguments, an internal, which takes the theta role of GOAL and an external one that is assigned the theta role of LOCATIVE. Given this, the canonical subject position cannot be filled by an expletive that lacks semantic content but rather by an Argument that is assigned a theta role.

Being an SVO language, when subject inversion takes place, the order that is followed is VSO and not VOS as illustrated below:

9)i) pro alikha-   li- a *omw- ana* sya- khuli- a

        V   S   O

        3sg. Pres. Cl1   eat   FV   sg. Cl1   child   cl7.sg. Food.   FV

          'The child is eating food'

ii)* pro alikha-   li- a   sya- khuli- a *omw- ana*

        V   O   S

        3sg. Pres. Cl1   eat   FV   cl7.sg. Food.   FV   sg. Cl1   child

          'The child is eating food'

Even in 9) i)   above, where the subject occurs post-verbally together with the object, there is agreement between the verb and the inverted subject; and the presence of the subject agreement markers on the verb licenses the occurrence of pro in the canonical subject

position, hence fulfilling the EPP requirements. Whereas i) is grammatical, ii) is ungrammatical because the structure violates the acceptable Lubukusu word order.

Although Bantu languages are said to have expletives (see Kimenyi, 1981), Lubukusu seem to behave differently. Given that the language has rich inflection, expletives are not required in the null subject position; instead, the subject markers on the verb are sufficient. This is in line with Rizzi's (1982) proposal that null subject languages do not have overt expletives. This is illustrated below:

10) pro   khe-   kw-   a.

   Cl11.pres   fall   FV

   'It is raining'.

Although the English translation has an expletive 'it', the same is not present in Lubukusu, instead, there is a subject marker *khe-* (class 11 subject marker) that occurs on the verb; hence it blocks the expletive from occurring in the canonical subject position. In this construction, the subject markers indicate that the unpronounced subject is from class 11, and it is an Argument that receives a theta role. Given that the null subject position in 10) is an Argument position, an expletive, which lacks semantics, cannot occupy this position. The subject marker *khe-* is interpretive, it has semantics. Consequently, there is no need of an expletive since the morphological requirements in the structure have already been taken care of by the subject marker on the verb. Like the other constructions, in 10), the subject position is filled by pro, hence satisfying the EPP requirement. This is illustrated below:

11) i) Efula/   Yiino   khe-   kw-   a.

    rain.cl11   this.cl11   cl11.pres   fall   FV

    'Rain/ this is falling/ raining'

As observed in 11), whether expletive that for instance occur in English are obligatorily absent in Lubukusu. The demonstrative pronoun occurs in the null subject position just as an overt noun. This justifies the occurrence of *pro* in the null subject position of such constructions and not an expletive that lacks semantic content.

3.2 Null Subjects in Embedded Clauses

Null subjects are also permitted in embedded clauses in Lubukusu. In such structures, the embedded null subject pronoun that occurs in the subordinate clause (which in this case is pro) is co-referential with a c-commanding subject in the super-ordinate clause. This is illustrated below:

12) [IP *Maria$_i$* a-   lom- il-   e [CP ali [IP *pro$_{ij}$* - alikhu- ch-   a   engo]]].

Mary   3sg. Cl1   say   pst   FV   C   pro. 3sg.cl1.fut   go   FV   home

'Mary said that she will go home'.

In the above clause, the subject that is dropped is in SPEC- IP position, which is an Argument

position and as such it is theta-marked. Evidence for this assumption is based on the fact that the verb **ch** 'go' has two theta roles to assign and hence it requires two Arguments, the internal and external. Since the internal one (*engo* 'home') is overtly marked and assigned the theta role of LOCATIVE, the external one must occur so that it receives the other theta role of AGENT. Though not pronounced, the null subject in the lower clause is co-indexed with the subject *Maria* in the matrix clause. It is from the matrix subject that the null subject in the subordinate clause derives its interpretation. Consequently, the occurrence of the null subject in (12) above satisfies the theta criterion as well as the EPP requirement.

Based on the GB principle, the null subject in 12) above is Argument bound (A-bound) but outside its governing category (GC). According to Chomsky (1981: 211), 'α is the governing category of β if and only if α is the minimal category containing β, a governor of β and a SUBJECT accessible to β. In 12) above, there is proof that the null subject is [-a, +p]; that is, a pronoun, which obeys principle B of the binding theory. This is the principle that requires that a pronoun be free in its governing category (and if bound, then it has to be bound outside its governing category; as in 12 above).

According to Rizzi (1982), languages that have null subjects; do not show that trace effect. Unlike non-pro drop language like English, where the complementizer 'that' can be left out in constructions after wh - movement has taken place, in Lubukusu, the complementizer must occur and it has to agree with an appropriate super-ordinate subject without which the structure becomes ungrammatical as illustrated below:

13i) [IP *Nanu$_i$* o- lom- il- e [CP ali [IP *pro$_{ij}$* - alikhu- ch- a engo]]].

    Who   3sg. Cl1 say pst FV C   pro. 3sg.cl1.fut   go   FV   home

'Who said that she/ he will go home?'

As much as the English translation is grammatical even without the complementizer 'that', in Lubukusu, it must occur, otherwise the structure becomes ungrammatical as illustrated below:

ii) *[IP *Nanu$_i$* o- lom- il- e [CP [-] [IP *pro$_{ij}$* - alikhu- ch- a engo]]].

        Who   3sg. Cl1   say pst FV [-]   pro. 3sg.cl1.fut   go

FV   home

'Who said that she/ he will go home?'

Though the English translation is grammatical, the structure in Lubukusu is not because the complementizer is absent; being a pro-drop language, it demands that the complementizer occur in such structures. This however contradicts with other Bantu languages like Kiswahili, which, regardless of being a pro-drop language, it behaves as non-pro drop languages like English in the sense that the complementizer can be omitted without affecting the grammaticality of the structure as illustrated below:

14 i) [IPNani   a- liye-   sem- a [CP ya kwamba [IP pro a-   ta- enda nyumbani?]]].

    Who   3sg. pst. say 3sg.   C   3sg. pst. go.   home

'Who said that she/ he will go home?'

ii) [IP Nani   a- liye-   sem- a [IP [-] a-   ta- enda nyumbani?]]].

    Who   3sg. pst. say 3sg.   3sg. pst. go.   home

'Who said that she/he will go home?'

The structures in 14) i) and ii) are grammatical, this is regardless of whether they have overtly marked complementizers or not.

Lubukusu being a null subject language allows the subject in the matrix clause to be omitted without negatively affecting the structure as shown below:

15) [IP *pro$_{i\,j}$* a- lom- il-   e [CP ali [IP *pro$_{ij}$* - alikhu- ch-   a   engo]]].

            3sg. Cl1   say pst   FV   C   pro. 3sg.cl1.fut   go   FV   home

        'He/ she said that he/ she will go home'.

As illustrated in the preceding discussion, Lubukusu allows null subjects in embedded clauses that are filled by *pro*, which derives its interpretation from within or without the discourse. Whether *pro* refers to an antecedent in the discourse or to a referent outside the discourse (though known by both speaker and hearer), it is still an Argument, bearing the theta role of AGENT and thereby satisfying the EPP requirements.

3.3 Null Subject in Co-Ordinate Noun Phrases

In Lubukusu, structures with conjoined NPs can either have subjects overtly realized or be dropped as long as the subject agreement markers are realized on the verb. In this case, NPs are conjoined and allowed to occur in the canonical subject position. When this happens, it demands that the subject agreement marker on the verb agrees with the compound NP in the subject position as below:

16) E-   khafu nende   e-   mbusi khechi-   lwal-   a.

    Sg.cl9 cow   conj   sg.cl9 goat   pres. pl. cl9   sick   FV

    'The cow and the goat are sick'

The conjoined NPs can be dropped without having negative implication on the grammaticality of the structure:

17) Pro khechi-   lwal-   a.

        pres. pl. cl9   sick   FV

    'They are sick'.

The two conjoined NPs form a single complex noun phrase, which translates into a single Argument. This is because the position that is occupied by the conjoined NPs is assigned a single theta role. This argument is based on the fact that the verb *-lwal-* 'sick' only requires one Argument to be complete. Given that the null subject position is an Argument position

that is assigned a theta role (meaning that a pronoun can occur in this position), the EPP requirement is met.

Just as with single noun phrases in subject position, free subject inversion is allowed in structures with conjoined NPs as illustrated below:

18) Pro Khechi-   lwal-   a   e-   khafu nende   e-   mbusi

   Pres.pl.cl10   sick   FV   sg.cl9   cow   and   sg.cl9   goat

   'The cow and the goat are sick'.

When subject inversion takes place, the plural verb (with plural subject markers) occurs with conjoined singular NPs. So for Lubukusu, what works with conjoined NPs is having a plural subject agreement marker and not a singular subject agreement marker as suggested by Marten (2011). The author gives the following examples from Lubukusu as being ungrammatical:

19) *E-   talangi nende   e-   khima   khechi-   p-   an-   a

 sg.cl9 lion   and   sg.cl9 monkey pres.pl.cl10   hit   rec.   FV

 'The lion and the monkey are hitting each other'.

The structure in 19) above that is marked as being ungrammatical by Marten (2011), is grammatical. This is what works for Lubukusu. Given that such structures are uncommon in Lubukusu, it is appropriate to say that they are marked but not ungrammatical as observed by Marten (2011).

For both; that is, the subject inverted and the non-inverted subject constructions, the subject agreement marker on the verb does not agree with any of the single NPs in the subject position, but with the entire conjoined NP, which forms a single Argument. Consequently, subject inversion is only possible because of the presence of the plural subject marker that is marked on the verb.

Co-ordination of NPs in Lubukusu only works if the noun phrases being conjoined belong to the same class and not to different classes as in:

20) Omw- ana nende e- khima * *kheba*- lwala/*khechi*- lwala/ **kha*- lwala/*khe*- lwal-   a

   Sg.cl1 child and sg.cl.9 monkey pres.pl.cl2   pres.pl.cl10 pres.pl.cl1 pres.pl.cl9. sick   FV

   'The child and the monkey are sick.'

In 20) above, as much as the English translation is grammatical and acceptable, none of the verbs that are given makes the construction grammatical or acceptable in Lubukusu. When conjoined NPs are from different classes, it is difficult to get a single verb that bears subject agreement markers that are suitable for the complex noun phrase. This makes it difficult to have such structures in Lubukusu.

3.4 Null Subjects in Interrogatives

Null subjects are allowed to occur in Lubukusu interrogatives as long as the subject agreement markers are marked on the tense phrase (TP). Just as with the preceding, it is assumed that null subject position is an Argument position that is theta-marked.

21) i) Yohana   a-   w- el-   e   omw-   ana si- na?

   John   3sg. cl1 give. Pst   FV sg.cl1   child sg. intr

   'What did John give the child?

     ii) pro   a- w- el-   e   omw-   ana   si- na?

                 3sg. cl1 give pst   FV SG.cl1   child sg. intr

            'What did he/she give the child'?

In 21) i) and ii), the verb -*w*- 'give' requires three Arguments to assign its theta roles. Two internal Arguments have been assigned to the object *omwana* 'child' and to the interrogative *sina* 'what' (which represents an Argument). The third theta role is assigned to the Argument in the subject position, whether overtly or marked or not; thereby satisfying the EPP as well as the theta criterion requirements.

At the S- structure, after movement of the interrogative from the post-verbal position (base position) to the pre-verbal position (the canonical subject position), takes place, the logical subject can be dropped without negatively impacting on the grammaticality of the construction as long as the subject agreement markers are marked on the TP. The null subject position in such constructions is also an Argument position that is theta-marked. Thus:

22) i) Si- na$_i$ ni- syo Yohana   a-   w- el- e omw- ana t$_i$?

   sg. intr. sg. aux   John   3sg.cl1. give. pst   FV 3sg.cl1 child

   'What did John give the child?

ii) Si na$_i$ ni- syo *pro* a-   w- el- e   omw- ana t$_i$?

    sg intr. aux   sg pro   3sg.cl1. give. pst FV 3sg.cl1 child

   'What did he/she give the child?'

The null subject in 22) ii) is allowed because of the presence of the subject agreement marker that is born by the verb -*w*- 'give'. This element licenses the occurrence of the null subject. Just as with 21) ii) above, the null subject position in 22) ii) is an Argument position that receives a theta role from the verb -*w*- 'give', which has three theta roles to assign. In this respect the EPP is satisfied.

When the interrogative moves from the post-verbal to the pre-verbal position in Lubukusu, it demands that an auxiliary verb, which agrees with it, also occurs. Thus:

23) *Si- na   ni- syo* pro a-   w- el- e omw- ana?

Sg. intr. aux. sg pro 3sg.cl1. give. pst FV 3sg.cl1 child

'What did he/she give the child?'

In 23) above, the interrogative marker *si*- (sg.) agrees with the auxiliary marker *-sy*- (sg.).

Apart from the subject agreement markers being marked on the verb and thereby null subject constructions satisfying the EPP; Lubukusu also allows determiners to bear agreement features that are based on those of the unrealized logical subject. These determiners function as subjects and such structures in Lubukusu satisfy the EPP.

4. Determiners

A determiner is a noun modifier. In Lubukusu, determiners follow the noun; they include demonstratives, possessives, quantifiers and numerals. In this language, they can be allowed to occur alone in the structure without a preceding noun (which basically functions as a subject) as long as they bear the appropriate agreement markers (the ones born by the unrealized head noun). Such structures are grammatical just as those that have the preceding noun overly marked; hence they satisfy the EPP requirements since they function as subjects in their new capacity.

24) Chi-   no   chi-   nditi   lukali khukhila   ch-   oosi

  Pl cl10 this   Pl cl10 small   Q   than   Pl cl10   all

  'These are smaller than all of them'.

The structure in 24) is grammatical. Though the English translation has an auxiliary, the Lubukusu version doesn't have one. Structures such as these are used in contexts where there is shared information; that is, the speaker and the hearer understand what the communication is about. The structure in (24) is grammatical and acceptable.

Possessives too behave likewise, they can occur in structure without the preceding noun. The agreement features born by the possessive are based on those of the unrealized noun. In such structures, EPP is satisfied because the possessive phrase functions as the subject.

25) Si- sy-   oo   si-   chafu.

      Sg cl7   poss   Sg cl7   dirty

  'Yours is dirty'.

Whereas the English version has an auxiliary verb, the Lubukusu version does not. Any native speaker will understand that the unrealized noun is from class 7 and that it is marked for singular.

Numerals in Lubukusu can also occur alone in structure; that is, without a preceding noun. Since such numerals bear appropriate agreement markers that are based on those of the unrealized noun, they function as subjects and thereby satisfy the EPP; thus:

26) Mu-   lala   omu-   rafu.

Sg cl1   one   sg cl1   harsh

'One is harsh'

The construction is grammatical and it does fulfill the requirements of EPP.

Quantifiers function in the subject position without a preceding noun. For them to function so, they have to bear agreement features that are derived from the unrealized noun. Thus:

27) Bi-   lal a   bi- titi   lukali.

Pl cl8   some Pl cl8 small   Q

'Some are very small'.

To a native speaker of Lubukusu, reading through the structure informs him/ her that the entity being referred to is from class 8, either living or non-living. Consequently the EPP requirements are met despite the fact that it is the determiner that is functioning as a subject.

5. Conclusion

From the discussion, Lubukusu is seen to be a consistent null subject language. Despite the absence of an overt subject in the canonical subject position in Lubukusu, such constructions satisfy the EPP. The position is not empty as such but it consists of an unpronounced pronoun *pro*, which has content just as the overtly marked pronouns. This unrealized pronoun in Lubukusu is only permitted in finite clauses whose verbs bear the subject agreement markers. Apart from this, the presence of the subject agreement markers on determiners licenses the occurrence of structures that satisfy the EPP.   Just as with pro, the position occupied by the determiner in the illustrations given is an argument position; hence it is a theta- marked position. Pro-drop in Lubukusu is motivated by the language's rich morphology as well as the discourse in which communication takes place.

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