

UNDERSTANDING DISCOURSE AT WORD LEVEL

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This paper explores how discourse structure is cascaded from processes emerging at the word and graduating through various levels of hierarchy to affect both purpose of text and meanings therein. At the heart of the argument is the interface of morphology with discourse and the variant influences that underpin these two fields. The major illustrative argument made is in the interpretive manner of discourse texts as underscored by various morphological operations. The paper will argue that through such interpretation, discourse structure emerges whilst at the behest of morphology. The theoretical position taken in the paper is that such an interface of morphology and discourse can best be examined through an inferential theory of communication in this case – Relevance theory. It is important and theoretically necessary to put to scrutiny current theories of communication to the test using local languages. Hence, the language of illustration for these arguments is Lubukusu, a Bantu language found in Kenya. The choice of language is intentional owing to the robust morphology that the language possesses. Further Babukusu speakers in the language group referred to as Luhya, are numerically superior to other dialect groups within Luhya, but scholarship in the area of discourse is curiously marginal. This paper intends to address such a disparity.