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## A semantic analysis of Lubukusu cut and break verbs

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### Abstract

This paper analyses the separation events, as manifested in the cut and break verbs in Lubukusu. This is done with a particular reference to the intention behind the separation, the instrument used in the disintegrating event and the manner in which the Cutting and Breaking events are expressed in Lubukusu. Video recordings of activities involving separation were compiled and presented to selected Lubukusu native speakers. Discourses on the various types of verbs used to describe the separation of fruits/crops from their trees/plants, separation events involving animals, people and items such as paper and clothes were also recorded. The corpora of the separation events were organized and grouped using the Bohnemeyer elicitation tool. Out of the 100 verbs of Cut and Break that were collected, the study systematically sampled 30 CUT verbs and 20 BREAK verbs. The study shows that meanings of Lubukusu CUT and BREAK verbs can either be constricted or widened contextually to suit the use. The paper contributes to the existing studies on CUT and BREAK verbs, and in the formulation of further cross-linguistic generalizations on this topic.

Keywords: BREAK, CUT, lexical-pragmatic, Lubukusu, verbs

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### Public Interest Statement

The present study identified and investigated how meaning of the Lubukusu C&B events is determined and conceptualized by the Lubukusu speakers. Most linguistic studies on Lubukusu have focused on the formal and theoretical configuration of constituents. The present study contributes to the interpretation that create networks of meaning that are related to a people's world view.

## 1. Introduction

Lewis et al. (2009) classifies Lubukusu as a Niger-Congo (narrow) Bantu language under J30. According to Sikuku (2011: 2-3), Lubukusu is closely related to Lugisu, a language spoken in eastern part of Uganda. This is evident from their mutual intelligibility. Sikuku (2011) further notes that within Lubukusu are subtle dialectal variations mainly related to geographical location and tonal but not semantic level. Lubukusu is referred to as the Northern most dialect of Luhya which is spoken mostly in Bungoma and TransNzoia counties and some areas of Uasin-Gishu and Kakamega counties (Nandelenga, 2000; 2013). Studies by Sikuku (2011) identify three types of dialectal variations thus: Western (Sudi), Central (Sirisia) and Eastern (Webuye). The variations inherent in these groups are phonological and lexical but do not affect intelligibility issues (Sikuku 2011). Since the variations are not grammatical, this study treats Lubukusu as a language within the Luhya macro-language following the categorisation proposed by contemporary scholars (see, e.g. Sasala, Mudogo & Barasa 2022; Odera, Barasa & Alati 2021).

Lubukusu Verbs represent the various forms of the acts and actions in diverse contexts and domains (Guersel et al. 1985). Levin (1995) notes that verbs that depict separation and disintegration of entities have been classified into two categories - CUT and BREAK verbs, henceforth abbreviated as C&B verbs. The C&B events are represented by culturally interpreted verbs that are analyzable within the pragmatic realm. The relevant factors that shape the use of Lubukusu separation verbs are analyzable within the field of pragmatics and pragmatically adjusted in context. The resultant meanings expressed by the event-based lexical items are projected from the social cultural sensitivity and collective consciousness of the members of the speech community. Thus, the lexical pragmatic analysis of Lubukusu C&B events sought to find out how the meanings of the lexicons are determined. The study identified and investigated how meaning of the Lubukusu C&B events is determined and conceptualized by the Lubukusu speakers in relation to the social contexts.

The CUT verbs in Lubukusu include two other subcategories known as PEEL and CRUSH verbs. These subcategories serve as hyponyms of the CUT verbs, that is, they depict different modes of cutting yet exhibit the same underlying feature of instrument involvement leading to an eventual change of state. In the subsequent sections, the semantics of each of the CUT verbs is outlined and a detailed discussion of the relevant interpretations associated with each of the verbs. Further, we provide the syntactic representations of the types of constructions in which the various interpretations of the verbs occur.

## 2. Semantic properties of Lubukusu CUT verbs

According to Dixon (2005), English CUT verbs involve three basic semantic roles— someone (an agent) who moves or manipulates something (an instrument) in order for it to come into contact with an entity or person (patient), which is in turn physically affected by the activity. The thing that is moved or manipulated is either an item held by the agent who carries out the activity or part of the agent. Dixon (2005); Levin (1993); Hopper & Thompson (1980) refer to the verbs in this category as prototypical transitive verbs. Dixon (2005) further describes English CUT verbs as referring to actions which involve the use of pointed or bladed instruments to penetrate the surface of another entity.

Four things that are critical with regard to this category of verbs are: motion, contact, effect and specification of instrument or the means by which the result is brought about (Levin 1993). These

characteristics are not only restricted to the CUT category, but also pertains to the PEEL and CRUSH group of verbs in English. Lubukusu CUT verbs have a high number of lexicalized derivative forms. For instance, the verb *xu-xala* ‘cut in half’, ‘cut in two pieces (lit.: it-cut) (of ropes or fruits)’ and *xu-xeβa* ‘cut; circumcise’; *xu-βera* ‘slash’ are still not used when the act described by the basic verb is repeated instead, they have gained specialized connotations, as evidenced from their interpretations. With the exception of the verb *xu-xala* ‘to cut’ which can be categorized as ‘agentive’, the remaining verbs can be described as highly ‘agentive’, following Ameka & Essegbey’s (2007) categorization. According to Levin & Rappaport Hovav (1995), the following characteristics are important in the selection of verbs that describe different C & B events.

Lubukusu employs a variety of verbs to describe clips where the effector has no command over the precise point of impact. Of these verbs, two groups contend with one another depending on the sort of effect. The verb *xu-saalaka* ‘to make series of small cuts’ is employed to separate rectangular thin items in situations where the effector has no control. On the other hand, *xu-rema* ‘to cut (up); cut; chop; down (a tree)’ *xu-sonjola* ‘to cut the branches of a tree’ and ‘cut (grass); clear (bush)’. Other verbs that imply command over the site of impact include: *xu-toja* ‘to chop’ as well as *xu-xala* ‘to cut or create body-marks’. Basically, the Lubukusu cut verbs are agent depended.

Change of state, in the context of C & B verbs, is a notable and systematic concept (Agyepong’ 2017). The difference is whether the concept is interpreted as having originally been removed from an organization (WHOLE) or partial separation. This is determined in the end result of the theme thus the wholeness or disintergratedness. For example, in reference to a tree as illustrated below:

Cut the tree (*rema kumusala*) — trim off the branches (*osonjole*) — cut off the leaves (*otete*) — cut the branches into small pieces (*otojake bipande*) — then split them into firewood (*wasake cixu*)

From example 1, the cut verbs attached to some specific NPs such as tree are sequential for the end result to be met. The verb *xu-rema* ‘to cut’ would mean to detach from the roots, *xu-sonjola* ‘to cut off the branches’. For the lexicalized iteration of the same verb *xu-saxa* ‘to cut into pieces’ or *xu-xwasaka*, ‘to split into small pieces (especially firewood)’ or *xu-xwara* ‘to split using a saw’ events which occur only when the objects already have been separated from the whole. From this example it is evident that some objects undergo more than one disintegration event to attain its end result.

Further, Lupke (2007) states that several Lubukusu verbs are referred to as “cut verbs” because of how they are lexically described. While break verbs do not choose a single instrument, these verbs are a contrast to them. If you want to cut anything, you definitely need the right tool (instrument): a knife for *xu-xala* ‘to cut’, using a knife, a sickle or razor for *xu-xwaara* ‘to cut open’, and so on and so forth. This is because cut verbs imply particular tools with particular characteristic of sharpness. For instance, the use of *xu-xala nende mashini* “cut, saw,” you’re implying that the disintegration will take more than one stroke, with a saw or a knife equipped with saw teeth. In impulsive reactions to video stimuli, verbs that lexically define instruments are unlikely to be the case, unless the instrument is unusual (Lupke 2007).

For Lubukusu speakers, C&B events that involve cutting ropes with a chisel or cutting fabric or carrots with hands are uncommon. In these circumstances, the typical instrument and the verb used for the matching canonical occurrence are mentioned. With scissors, you can cut linen, rope, or hair. When cutting or slicing, razor blades or knives. For instance, the meanings of cut events are influenced by factors such as the size of object and, the instrument used, the intention of the event and the manner of occurrence.

Culturally, speaker does not necessarily need to mention the instrument in speech for the verb to occur with specific NPs. It is clear that the verb *xu-sinja* ‘to slaughter’, only co-occurs with a specific

NP object which is the features poultry, chicken and with the cut event done with a specific instrument a knife. On the other hand, *xu-xoŋa* refers to the event of slaughtering but then the characteristics of these theme argument in the configuration is identified with its distinct features of being a huge, well fed animal, in this case a bull. Thus, from the socio-cultural context, the Lubukusu interlocutors are able to decipher meaning on the mention of the verb even without a complete sentence construction.

### 3. Interpretations of Lubukusu CUT verbs

Wilkins and Hill (1995) highlight the need to distinguish the way in which individual lexemes are treated and understood from utterances that contain these lexemes. They argue that the various readings of verbs are distinguished on the basis of the types of arguments the verbs or lexemes collocate with. On this premise, the Lubukusu CUT verbs and the various types of NPs with which they collocate are explored in the subsequent sections.

#### 3.1. To cut ‘*xu-xala*’

This reading of the verb describes separation, damage of an object or entity that generally involves the use of a bladed instrument (for example a knife, razor, and scissors). The instrument is what the agent uses to carry out the action/event denoted by the cut verb. This bladed object is made to come into contact with the entity which finally leads to a separation or a change in the ‘material integrity’ of the object (Hale & Keyser 1987).

Possible NPs that co-occur with the verb *xu-xala* ‘to cut’ in order to yield the ‘cut/cut off’ interpretation is of a wide range. They include food items such as (*kumukate* ‘bread’, *liembe* ‘mango’, *litore* ‘banana’), materials (*engubo* ‘cloth’, *kumukoje* ‘rope’) and body parts (*lulwala* ‘finger’, *litere* ‘nail’). The following are some examples with the CUT verbs.

- 2a. Nekesa    *ka-xalile*    *kumukate*  
       N            1SG-cut        bread  
       “Nekesa has cut bread”
- b.    *ka-xalile*    *liembe bipande*        *munane*  
       1SG-cut    mango pieces            eight  
       “S/he cut the mango into eight pieces”
- c.    *Mwalimu Machefwe*    *ka-kekile*        *litore*  
       Teacher N            1SG-cut        a.banana  
       “Teacher Machefwe cut the banana (bunch) from the tree.”

A two-place construction is used in (2a) in which the agent *Nekesa* is responsible for the cutting of the bread. Though not overtly mentioned in example (2a), there is an understood involvement of an instrument. In (2b), however, the verb occurs in a Post-position construction headed which results in the object NP *liembe* ‘mango’ becoming smaller in size than how it appeared before the cut. The object *liembe* ‘mango’ does not only become ‘not whole’ but also creates a new form of the object is created. In (2c), a multiple object conveys the idea of cutting/lopping. In the three instances, the interpretation conveyed is that of disconnection or separation of the object in question. The verb *xu-xala* ‘to cut’ occurs in different constructions.

#### 3.2. To cut a cloth (for sewing)

The verb *xu-xala* ‘to cut’ collocates with the NP *enguḡo* ‘cloth’ to describe the process of cutting out a textile for the specific purpose of sewing (a purposeful type of cutting). It is the case that such fabrics usually come in full pieces (6 yards). People, depending on their sizes and choice of styles, purchase portions of such textiles, which are usually cut lengthwise with a pair of scissors. The fabrics are

subsequently cut out into specific patterns and sewn. The reduplicated form of the verb *xu-xala* 'to cut' focuses on the multiple cuttings that are done in order to get the patterns needed to make the dress.

### 3.3. To cut down/to harvest

This involves the process of separating foodstuffs from a tree or stalk. The separation of such food items usually involves the use of a sharp, bladed instrument such as a knife or machete. A more contextual interpretation of the verb *xu-xala* 'to cut' relates to the harvesting of food stuffs such as banana. The harvesting of banana involves the cutting of the entire tree, in order to get access to the ready banana, and also allow for the growth of a new plant, which usually germinates at the base of the banana tree. In this case, the cutting of the whole tree gives the farmer easy access to the banana bunch, due to the height of the tree. In such contexts, the reference is not to a specific crop but rather to the process of food harvest in general.

### 3.4. To make mounds

The verb *xu-βusia* 'to collect' collocates with the NP *cimumbi* 'soil mounds' to derive the interpretation of making mounds. This verb is used in this context because of the instrument that is used to make the mounds and the case that the process is carried out with either a hoe or a machete as illustrated below;

3. *Ja-βacimumbi*                      *ce*                      *kamapwoni*  
ISG-cut                      mounds                      PREP                      potatoes  
"Dig up mounds of sweet potatoes."

This process of making mounds has a creation sense. to an extent that, it involves digging up the soil from the earth and shaping it in to a pyramid form in order to plant root tubers such as sweet potatoes.

### 3.5. To mow/ to weed/ to prune

The verb *xu-teta* 'to prune' is used to describe the act of clearing shrubs such as green grasses, lawns or hedges. The range of typical instruments used in the process of mowing/weeding or pruning includes a mowing machine, machete, scissors, or shears. The common feature for all these instruments is their sharp blades/edges which come into contact with weeds or plants in order for the cutting process to be accomplished. Example (4) below illustrate this interpretation.

4. *Ka-mauwa kano kejiβwa*                      *ka-teteβwe*  
PL-flower                      these                      supposed                      PL-cut  
"These flowers need to be pruned."

In (4) the cutting /pruning off the top parts of the flowers results in a reduction of the flower's height thus reduction of the height of the flowers, and the aesthetic value restored. Other forms of Lubukusu CUT verbs are presented and appear with various characteristics under varied contexts. In that some cut verbs, like all other CUT verbs describes the process of using a sharp instrument to bring about a separation in an entity. These verbs do not just mean a separation in an entity by the use of an instrument. Rather, it implies the use of force to bring about a separation in an entity through the use of a sharp instrument.

#### 3.5.1. To cut up/ cut in pieces

This verb refers to the process of cutting up food items into pieces or the slashing of entities. There is an extra exertion of force, for this reason heavy instruments such as big knives, cutlasses, and machetes are normally required for this type of cutting. Also, the types of food items that can collocate with this verb are restricted to some extent. The major characteristic of such food items is that they are hard in nature

or contain big bones, as in the case of slaughtered animals.

For example, in Lubukusu *xu-topa* ‘cut up/cut into pieces’ can be used to refer to the cutting up of freshly slaughtered meat. It can also be used to describe the cutting of cassava into pieces; it cannot be applied to other root tubers which means that even though they are all root tubers and can be cut up, the extremely firm nature of cassava makes it necessary to apply extra force.

### 3.5.2. ‘To prick/ to pierce/stab’

These verbs map onto the English POKE verbs discussed in Levin (1993) and the English STAB verbs presented by Dixon (2005). According to Levin (1993) and Dixon (2005), the verbs in this category involve a pointed or bladed instrument, penetrating through the surface of an object or location. Location in this context could refer to a body part or a part of an object. During the process, the instrument is moved by the agent and brought into contact with the location, which further penetrates it to bring about a change in the body of the theme argument. Levin (1993) further argues that the agent of these verbs is always expressed as the subject of the construction, with the location/theme acting as the object of the verb.

The verbs *xu-waana* ‘to stab,’ and *xu-toboja* ‘to pierce’ are synonymous to some extent and can sometimes be used interchangeably to depict the sense of piercing or pricking. However, it is only the verb *xu-waana* that yield the ‘to stab’ and interpretations. The ‘to pound interpretation’ involves the use of the flat end of long, object such as a pestle, to bring about a disintegration of an object. The verb *xu-waana* also collocates with animate NPs to derive the interpretation ‘to stab’. Both verbs occur in the two-place construction, with only *xutoβoja* ‘to pierce’ occurring in the one-place construction. The verbs also occur in the PostP constructions.

## 4. PEEL Verbs

This section discusses another group of CUT verbs, that is, PEEL verbs. However, unlike the CUT verbs, this group of verbs describe separations involving the removal of the outer covering of entities with sharp, bladed instruments or the hands. The hands in these cases are also treated as instruments. The hands are seen by default as an anthropocentric part of the human body since it is involved in almost all human movements and activities. This group of verbs have been classified by Levin (1993) as PEEL verbs with reference to English. The Lubukusu verbs are discussed under this theme since they describe similar processes as discussed below:

### 4.1. ‘to peel / to sharpen / carve’

This involves the use of a bladed instrument such as a knife or a blade to remove the outer covering of an entity in an artistic and purposeful manner. This verb comes in three variants, each with its own meaning, but fundamentally sharing the feature of either involving ‘outer covering removal’ or ‘bladed instrument involvement’ or both in most cases. The variants are *xu-xenga* ‘to sharpen’ and *Peel* ‘*xu-ara*’ and the reduplicated form ‘to peel.

The verb to peel collocates with food items such as banana, sweet potatoes and fruits like mangoes, pawpaw, pineapple, and oranges. We notice that the verb is able to collocate with the NP pencil (since it involves the removal of an outer covering) as well.

- 5a. *Wafula*     *xa-ara*     *litore*  
N            PRS-cut     a.banana  
“Wafula is peeling a banana.”
- b. *Omwana*     *kamalile*     *xu-xenga*     *epenso*  
N            finished     INF-cut     pencil  
“The child has finished to sharp the pencil.”

#### 4.2. ‘To peel/dehusk’

This verb on its own lexicalizes manner rather than instrument. This is because most of the peeling processes that this verb describes can be done with the bare hands, and do not necessarily require an instrument. In these cases, the hands act as the default instrument. For instance, the dehusking of maize and the peeling of banana involve the hands rather than a knife, the peeling of plantain is however done with both a knife and the hand

- 6a. *Xa-xoβola kamaindi* ISG-cut maize  
 “S/he is dehusking the maize.”  
 b. *Mercy xa-ara litore*  
 N ISG-cut a.banana  
 “Mercy is peeling a banana.”

#### 4.3. To scale

This verb describes the process whereby a bladed instrument is used to scrape, peel off or scale a theme/object. This action can also be carried out with the fingernails depending on the type of entity that undergoes the peeling. Also, the type of interpretation derived is dependent on the NP the verb collocates with. Some theme arguments in Lubukusu undergo more than one cut event action. For example, food items such as, potatoes, banana and cassava are usually scraped after they have been peeled.

7. *Nomala xu-xenga ka-mapwoni, arakara*  
 When ISG-cut PL-potatoes ISG-cut  
 “When you’re done with peeling off the sweet potatoes, scrap them.”

The verbs that have been discussed under this subsection describe the removal of the outer covering of entities either with a bladed instrument or the hands. The verbs under this category have been referred to as PEEL verbs by Levin (1993). They occur in the Two-Place construction and *de-SVC* construction.

### 5. The semantics of Lubukusu BREAK verbs

Breaking events, like their cutting counterparts, bring about a separation/disintegration in the ‘Material integrity’ of objects that undergo such actions. This event type involves a theme, which is usually whole, undergoing a changing state to become non-integrated. When objects are broken, they no longer form a complete piece but rather become one or more pieces depending on the type of object and the manner in which the object is broken. Majid et al. 2007; Bowerman 2007; Bouveret and Sweetser 2009 argue that BREAK actions do not require instruments in order to achieve their end results unlike CUT verbs. BREAK verbs are therefore considered pure change of state verbs in both their transitive and intransitive usages because they express a change of state without specifying how the change was brought about. There is discontinuity that occurs when certain objects are broken, that is, there is a form of interruption in the once continuous entity. Objects that are capable of demonstrating such discontinuity include sticks, ropes, bread etc. The fracture caused by the breaking can either be partial or complete. An example of a partial fracture can be the incomplete breaking of a twig from the branch of a tree, while a complete fracture involves a full detachment of the twig from the branch. Examples of Lubukusu BREAK verbs include: *xu-funa* ‘to break’, *βwasuxa* ‘to split, to burst’ *xu-atixa* ‘to disjoin or separate with some effort’, ‘to crumble especially of dry things, to pluck off *xu-rora*’.

#### 5.1. BREAK verbs and their constructions

This section discusses the semantics of each of the Lubukusu BREAK verbs by showing the NPs with which they collocate, and the interpretations that are derived as a result of such combinations. Two

other sets of verbs elicited with the Bohne Meyer et al. (2001) and Agyepong (2015) videos are also discussed in this section which are the TEAR and OPEN verbs. The various types of constructions in which each of the verbs occur will also be presented.

In Lubukusu, the meaning disparity between C&B verbs is represented in the form of their arguments. There is a difference between transitive verbs and cut verbs. BREAK verbs engage in the direct causal alternation if the way or Instrument of the accompanying state change is not indicated. Notably, a few Lubukusu BREAK verbs do not switch between “inchoative” and “causative transitive” usages, which is notable. For inter-language predictions about the link between “event structure” and “argument structure”, these non-alternating BREAK verbs provide a challenge.

Table1: A summary of Lubukusu break verbs

Number	Break verb	Gloss	Object	End result/COS
1	xuu-funa	To break into two	Stick	Separated into two
2	xuu-xwatixa	To burst/to shatter into small pieces/to crack	Glass	Shattered
3	xu-βlunguxa	Crumble into small pieces	Lump of soil	Crumbled
4	xu-βwasuxa	Splinter into small pieces	Glass	Splintered, separated into small sharp pieces
5	xu-ula	Smash something by hitting	Bean pods	Smashed pods to separate beans
6	xu-sia	To grind	Grains	Grinded to form powder/flour
7	xu-xoβola	To de-husk	Maize	Separate from husks
8	xu-xwoβula		Bark of a tree	Separate the peels from the main tree/stem
9	/xuβulungula	To shell from a cob	Maize from the cob	Separate maize cereals from cob
10	xu-xongola	To separate maize from the stalk	Maize	Separate maize from stalk
11	xu-fura	To remove feathers	Chicken	Separate feathers from chicken using a hand
12	xu-mamula	To remove feathers involves fire	Chicken	Separate feathers from a bird using fire
13	xu-kusula	Break a whole bread into two without a formula	Block Loaf of bread	Separate the loaf with no exact shape
14	xu-rora	Separate leaves from the stem of vegetables	Vegetables	Separate leaves from the stem

From table 1 above we deduce that, break verbs are focused on the “state change sub-event” and do not specify the nature of the source of the phase transition. When asked about various methods resulting in the state change indicated by *xu-xwatixa* ‘break, crack’, respondents provided a wide range of situations, including dropping the lantern, walking on it, hurling it, among others. As a result, a few of

these verbs, such as the break verbs, are only documented with the transitive pragmatic point of view. For instance, the BREAK verbs, such as the break verbs *xu-xwatixa* and *xu-uula*, are only documented with reflexive argument structures. Lubukusu, a language that uses direct causal alternation, has a category of reflexive, non-alternating verbs of perfect state change that defies expectations by Haspelmath (1993), Guerssel et al. (1985), Levin (1993), and Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1993). (1995). for research into the meaning elements of Lubukusu only.

For break verbs, just as any other verb as stated by Nicholas (2016), it is necessary to determine if the verbs are distinct from direct causal or inverse verbs of perfect state change or if their presence is a byproduct of the language's preference for lexicalizing events in sentential verb roots, and thus pertaining to the Nicholas, (2016) sort of "profoundly sentential" languages, or if their presence is a strange case. In Lubukusu, the non-alternating sentential BREAK verbs are an exception. From a lexical standpoint, they appear to be the same as other intransitive or causation/effect alternating verbs. Syntactically, however, these verbs resemble state change verbs with a sub event that includes manner and instrumentation.

## 8. Conclusion

Lubukusu verbs are referred to as "cut verbs" because of how they are lexically described. While break verbs do not choose a single instrument, these verbs are a contrast to them. If you want to cut anything, you definitely need the right tool (instrument): a knife for *xu-xala* 'to cut', using a knife, a sickle or razor for *xu-xwaara* 'to cut open', and so on and so forth. This is because cut verbs imply particular tools with particular characteristic of sharpness. The semantics associated with the CUT verbs in Lubukusu have been described to illustrate that, the Lubukusu CUT verbs encode information about control (agent), instrument, manner of separation and the result state of the theme. The cutting events can either result in partial separation of the theme or a complete separation. On the other hand, Break verbs categories include Break, Tear, Open and Crush. Some Break verbs behave like Cut verbs, in requiring the necessary application of sharp/bladed instrument in order to achieve the required change of state while most of the Break verbs don't take instruments.

In the interpretation of meanings of the Lubukusu Cut and Break verbs, the socio-cultural milieu is key in that the disintegration event must be placed within a particular context for a proper meaning to be attached. The paper also indicates the relevance of the NP Arguments in concurrences within the Lubukusu language. In that the within the Lubukusu language, the interpretation of some C&B verbs is stereotypical. For instance on the mention of *xu-toja* 'to slaughter a bull' and *xu-sinja* 'to slaughter chicken' factors of the NP, size of the NP and the instrument used in the separation event are encoded in the mind of the interlocutors and are not mentioned by the speakers. Finally, the research has shown the effective role that constructions play in deriving multiple Lubukusu Cut and Break verbal interpretations within. The research recommends a further investigation to see if there exist any form of relation at all or whether in such cases one can argue that there are actually two separate verbs such as *xufumβa* which is related to the core meaning 'to break' and *xufumβa* which is not related to the 'to break' meaning.

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**Authorship and Level of Contribution**

Annematha Wafula is the lead researcher in this study. She conceptualized the research idea, wrote the proposal, developed the research instruments, and led the collection of data for the study and the writing of the manuscript. David Barasa and Atichi Alati supervised the whole writing process, assisted in the final writing of the manuscript.

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