

## **Studies in African Linguistics**

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### G. Tucker Childs: *The S-Aux-O-V-Other Syntagm In Atlantic*

As the largest language phylum in the world and the most geographically widespread (Williamson & Blench 2000), Niger-Congo understandably exhibits some variation at all grammatical levels. Basic word order stands as no exception to this generalization, and there have been partisans for both an SOV and an SVO reconstructed word order. Gensler 1994 attempts to reconcile the two by claiming that neither proposal is correct; he suggests that both SOV and SVO are derived from Proto-Niger-Congo \*S-AUX-O-V-Other. Because of the pattern's "quirkiness" (being found virtually nowhere else in the world) and because it is so widely attested in geographically widely separated Niger-Congo languages, the pattern should be reconstructed for all of Niger-Congo. One crucial piece of evidence for this claim comes from the Southern Atlantic language Kisi. This paper explores Kisi's facts in further detail to show how central the structure is to the language. It then expands the investigation to other languages of Atlantic, finding that the pattern is much more widely attested than was previously realized, albeit in an attenuated form. The paper concludes by discussing the significance of the Atlantic facts to Niger-Congo in general.

### Peter Kinyua Muriungi: *Wh-Questions In Kitharaka*

This paper explores question formation in Kitharaka (E54; Bantu; Kenyan) within the crosslinguistic approach developed in Sabel (2000, 2002, 2003). According to Sabel, variation in the positioning of wh-phrases in languages can be explained if it is assumed that wh-movement is universally triggered by [+wh] and [+focus] features, both of which are [+interpretable] and can be specified as [ $\pm$ strong]. For Kitharaka, I argue that wh-movement is triggered by a strong [+focus] feature in a functional head (Foc). The strong [+focus] feature on a focus head is morphologically manifested by a focus marker which attaches to a fronted wh-phrase, and in case of long wh-movement, by the focus markers that may appear on embedded clauses crossed by overt wh-movement. *Wh-in situ* occurs when no strong [+focus] features are introduced in the syntax (Muriungi 2003, 2004).