

Syntactic Analysis of Textual Metafunction of Kidawida Subordinate Clauses

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ABSTRACT

Subordinate clauses play a crucial role in providing additional syntactic information. Analyzing these clauses in any language requires examining their structure and function within a sentence. While previous studies have explored various linguistic features of Kidawida word classes, a syntactic analysis of textual metafunction of Kidawida subordinate clauses remains limited which the current study focused on. The analytical tool was Systemic Functional Grammar Theory by [16]. A qualitative descriptive research design was used to collect and analyze data. The Data was collected using document analysis guide tool through the technique of text selection method on Kidawida written books. The study was carried out in Werugha public library found in Msidunyi village, Taita Sub County, Taita Taveta County. Sentences having Kidawida subordinate clauses were extracted from the five selected texts: Chughano ra Kidawida, Midedo ya Kidawida, Ndawi ra Wadawida, Taita Beginners Guide Book, and Wadawida: Writings on the Customs of Taita. A purposive sampling technique was adopted to select 30 subordinate clauses across these texts. Ten of these clauses were used for discussion. The collected data was transcribed then presented in tables and narrative form for analysis. The findings contribute to linguistic studies in the understanding of Kidawida syntax. Additionally, the study supports efforts in preserving the Kidawida language.

Keywords: Subordinate clauses, textual metafunction, Kidawida written books, syntactic structure

INTRODUCTION

A clause is a group of words containing a subject and predicate and functioning as a member of a complex or compound sentence which convey meaning within a sentence structure [1]. They can be independent or dependent, forming the core elements of sentence structures. A clause structure is an essential part of syntax because it helps determine the meaning and function of a sentence. Within Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), a clause is a unit of meaning which functions either independently or as part of a larger syntactic construction. [2] distinguishes between clause simplex and complex. He refers to a simple clause structure and clause complex as involving more intricate constructions through parataxis (use coordinating conjunctions, such as "and" or "but," to join the independent elements together) and hypotaxis (uses subordinating conjunctions and relative pronouns to connect a sentence's main clause to its dependent elements such as because, although, since). [3] explain that grammatical structures consist of constituents defined by both class and function. Class refers to a group with shared features and function refers to the role a class member play. As explained by [4], relative clause which is one of the subordinate clauses, acts as modifiers to add descriptive detail to nouns.

Subordinate clauses are critical components of sentences that exhibit complete thoughts. Their analysis involves examining their structural elements within the framework of SFG. According to [5], clause analysis should consider three meta functions: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. This study focused on the textual meta function which examines how clauses organize information in a discourse, unlike the ideational meta function which is concerned with the representation of experience and logical relations in the world. Interpersonal meta function on the other hand concerns how speakers enact social relationships, express stance, and negotiate roles.

Kidawida is part of the Northeast Coast Bantu subgroup of the Niger-Congo language family [6-7]. It is spoken in areas such as the Taita Hills, Saghal Hills, Kasighau Hill, and Voi town. The native speakers inhabit South-East Kenya, mainly the Taita hills (Taita District, Coast Province), and North-East Tanzania near the Kenyan border to the east of Mount Kilimanjaro [8]. As of the 2019 census in Kenya, Taita-Taveta County had a population of about 340,671, with a 1.4% annual growth rate [9]. Kidawida is an indigenous minority language which is represented by closely related and mutually intelligible dialects listed in Ethnologue [10]. Kidawida is an SVO language like many other Bantu languages though it exhibits complex syntactic structures. It exhibits a noun class system with agglutinative morphology [11].

Statement of the Problem

Studies on Kidawida shows little attention to how subordinate clauses are formed and their roles in constructing meaning. This indicates inadequate understanding of the language's grammatical system. Kidawida exhibits a rich and intricate pattern of clause combination, yet the principles underlying subordination and their functional significance have not been documented. This limits broader linguistic understanding of how meaning is organized and interpreted in the language. The present research addressed this gap through the syntactic analysis of textual metfunction using systemic functional approach.

Research Objective

To analyze textual metafunction of Kidawida subordinate clauses.

Limitations

The focus was on subordinate clauses and not any other clause in Kidawida. The concerns were narrowed to textual metafunction and the data was drawn exclusively from written Kidawida texts. Other levels of linguistic analysis like phonology, morphology, among others were not in the interest of the study. However, relying on texts from a specific speech community (Dawida) did not represent fully the regional variations. As much as SFG allows for analysis at various linguistic levels, this study was only confined to the clause level.

Implications

The findings are of great value to linguistic typology and cross-linguistic studies on Bantu and other language families. The findings also support preservation efforts and the documentation of Kidawida. Additionally, the study serves as a reference to linguists, educators, and policymakers concerning the structuring of the subordinate clauses [12]

LITERATURE REVIEW

Adopted Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) to analyze Joe Biden's victory speech at the clause level. The study focuses on the ideational metafunction to examine the transitivity process type of a text. In this respect, the speech text was changed into some sentences and clauses and thereafter analyzed. The result of analysis shows that the material process type appears at most, which indicates the action of the participants involved in the speech. In addition, by means of transitivity analysis, interpersonal and power relation is revealed as the existence of pronouns linking to verbs used in clauses of the text. The findings show clauses as key units in conveying information, asking questions, and issuing commands. This study offers valuable insights on general clause functions. However, it does not address how subordinate clauses contribute to cohesion, coherence, and information flow. The current study addressed this gap by analyzing the theme and rheme structure of subordinate clauses. [13]

Analyzed the packing of sentence information in the editorials of the Daily Graphic (DG). The focus is on clause complexing in The Ghanaian Times editorials using SFL, which is in line with the current study. It explores the

structural types of sentences; compound or complex sentences which are dominant and how they relate in the editorials. It also examines the ways in which these sentences are combined and oriented in meaning with a broad outline of a particular framework of systemic functional grammar, clause complexing. Again, the study explored the communicative implications encoded in the editorials. The researcher purposively sampled 10 editorials spanning a period of three months (January to March 2014) and did qualitative and textual analysis on the issue of clause complexity. The findings show how clause complexes formed through parataxis and hypotaxis enhance textual cohesion, to facilitate logical progression of ideas. Further, subordinate clauses support main clauses by giving additional information, conditions, or justification. However, the analysis is not based within the textual metafunction, particularly their role in thematic progression and discourse organization. To address this gap, the current study focused on how subordinate clauses function within the textual metafunction to structure information flow and enhance rhetorical coherence.[14]

Studied the textual metafunctional patterns in two fictional versions of a Biblical Parable in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's novel *Devil on the Cross* (1982), in order to find the similarities and differences between their compositional features. It critically draws on the theory of systemic functional linguistics to overview the theoretical background to the study, with focus on the grammar of textual meaning, proposes a new theme classification and uses it to analyze the thematic structure and taxis system of the two extracts. The findings reveal how cohesion, coherence, and thematic structure contribute to meaning-making and discourse organization. This demonstrates the functions of cohesive devices, such as reference, conjunctions, and lexical cohesion in maintaining logical progression and thematic continuity. However, the analysis of the subordinate clauses in textual metafunction is not covered as examined in the current study.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) was adopted as analytical tool in the current study. This is a model that was first developed within the Functional Grammar [15] and developed further into Systemic Functional Grammar [16]. The current study adopted this new development in data analysis. Systemic Functional Grammar entails meaning relations categorized as metafunctions. They describe how language simultaneously fulfills various communicative roles. The first one is the ideational metafunction, the second one is interpersonal metafunction and the third one is textual metafunction. Therefore, SFG provides a holistic perspective that bridges form and function. This makes it suited to the analysis of subordinate clauses in Kidawida, a language whose structures have been underexplored in functional terms.

The current study employed textual metafunction tenet of SFG. This tenet entails tools which can analyze how subordinate clauses contribute to coherence and cohesion in discourse [16]. However, [17] posits that Kidawida clauses do not always function predictably in maintaining discourse flow (In contrast, the ideational and interpersonal metafunctions focus on what is said and how relationships are expressed). In the current study, textual metafunction was used to examine how Kidawida subordinate clauses are organized to make messages flow logically and effectively.

Textual metafunction focuses on the information entailed in the clauses, which was the focus of this study. This tenet was therefore used to find out categories of Kidawida subordinate clauses, and how these categories hold together to shape coherence. For instance, in the clause complex *Firimbi yechakabwa eri nyamandu rilole chia yepata machi* (A whistle was blown so that all animals could meet to discuss how to get water), the subordinate clauses *eri nyamandu rilole chia* ('so that all animals could meet') and *yepata machi* (to get water) function to organize the flow of information rather than strictly signaling cohesion in the conventional sense. This exhibits how Kidawida employ subordination to shape discourse, directly addressing how subordinate clauses shape text formation as well as coherence.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study adopted a descriptive qualitative research design. [18] note that descriptive qualitative research is suitable for linguistic studies that seek to observe and document language structures without experimental intervention. The qualitative approach was used for an in-depth exploration of how subordinate clauses in Kidawida function within sentence construction. The study was carried out at Werugha public library in Msidunyi village, Taita Sub County, Taita Taveta County. The library has a collection of Kidawida texts including cultural, literary, and educational materials that were relevant for the analysis of subordinate clauses. Additionally, the library is a central resource for local researchers and Kidawida speakers making it an ideal location for linguistically grounded document analysis.

The target population constituted Kidawida subordinate clauses. This population was significant since the study sought to find out how the structural nature of subordinate clauses determine functional roles in Kidawida discourse. A purposive sampling technique was chosen to determine sample size. Purposive sampling allowed for the selection of Kidawida written texts containing subordinate clauses. The current study focused on syntactic structures and functions rather than human participants; hence, the sample size was determined from the number of subordinate clauses dealt with in the current study. Therefore, 30 subordinate clauses were sampled for this study from 5 Kidawida written books such as Chughano ra Kidawida, Midedo ya Kidawida, Ndawi ra Wadawida, Taita Beginners Guide Book, and Wadawida: Writings on the Customs of Taita. An important step when designing an empirical study is to justify the sample size collected. The sample collected was able to give in-depth information concerning Kidawida subordinate clauses. This is supported by [19] who suggest that a sample size which is as low as 24, is enough to enable generalization of a study.

A text selection method was used to extract sentences having Kidawida subordinate clauses. Predefined selection criteria were adopted to guide the acquisition of structurally relevant sentences for analysis. Document analysis guide was then designed to ensure extraction of Kidawida subordinate clauses. For data extraction, a transcription guide was developed. This guide was used to ensure all extracted Kidawida clause complexes were recorded, presented, and analyzed linguistically.

A pilot study was carried out at the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK) office in Voi Town, Voi Sub-County, Taita Taveta County. Kidawida Bible was adopted as the test corpus. Ten (10) verses were purposively sampled. This constituted five verses from Genesis 22:1-10, narrating the story of Abraham and Isaac, and five verses from Matthew 13:3-7, on the parable of the sower. Content validity test was done on the selected verses using the document analysis guide. This was intended to test its ability in identifying clause complexes, distinguishing main and subordinate clauses. To test the reliability of the research instrument, expert verification method was used by engaging two competent native Kidawida speakers from Taita Sub-County to verify the extracted and transcribed data. The researcher's own competence in Kidawida further confirmed the verification process. The results indicated that the two instruments were effective in isolating and documenting subordinate clauses. However, minor revisions were made to improve on clarity.

Data was presented by integrating Kidawida subordinate clauses with their English gloss to ensure clarity. Tables were included to visually represent the syntactic structures of Kidawida subordinate clauses given the text-heavy nature of qualitative data. The textual metafunction of Kidawida subordinate clauses were analyzed through the identification of themes (starting points of clauses) and rhemes (points of departure). Assessment of how subordinate clauses extend, elaborate, or enhance the main clause's theme was also done. Before data collection, permission was sought from Werugha Public Library management. During data collection, institutional protocols were observed. Further, the study adhered to integrity in data collection and also observing minimal disruptions to the library operations. By and large, there was a responsible data handling, and consideration of intellectual property respect.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study explored functions of subordinate clauses in the construction of messages to maintain the flow of a discourse. The analysis was concerned with how subordinate clauses get positioned and integrated in texts. The attention was on the organizational principles to shape meaning, guiding interpretation. 30 clauses were sampled and 10 were selected for discussion. Table 5.1 gives the summary of the sampled clauses and their functions before analyzing their textual metafunctions.

Table 5.1: Summary of Analyzed Clause Types and Their Functions

Clause Type	Function	Clauses Identified from the Corpus
Relative Clause	Modifies a noun by providing additional descriptive information.	Mwakio wokoghe na njau ija yedokagha mando mfungade ; Mundu uja wawesukwa wadalola modo ; Kai ija isechurwagha ; Agha malagho ni gha wandu awaje wikunde kumaya kimzedu ; Wikavika andu aho oreghoreloghe ni Mlungu ; Rimu rikapotoka maghonyi andu kuserekoghe na ndoe nyingi .
Conditional Clause	Expresses a condition upon which the main clause depends.	Iji chafuma ndechiwuyaa; Iji kuchikunde kwaki kusejijagha; Iji kwabonya bidii, kuidagha mtihani; Kuwadwagha iji kwaendelea kutukana wandu; Ichija chiko andenyi ndechifumagha shighadi.
Adverbial Clause of Cause/Reason	Explains the reason or cause of the action in the main clause.	Muriri udebula mruna kwa wundu ghwa vindo ; Wambao wikalegha kumdukisha kwa wundu nuo ushekerie mruna Muriri ukabwagha ; Mwakwaru ndeunywagha machi ghanghi kwa wundu udelegha ku-whadana mikono na wambao ; Rikabuka kwa wundu ghwa rija ndoe ndini rekoghe ; Malagho agha ni gha faida mbaa na ndighi kwa kukaia jingi ndechiandikilo chuo chingi chiko na malagho na maza ra Kidawida .
Adverbial Clause of Purpose	Indicates the intention or purpose of the action.	... kumwika idawonyi ja nyumba eri uweto ni mbeo ; Aho shimba yacheruruma eri kumturusha mwakwaru ; Firimbi yechakabwa eri nyamandu rilole chia yepata machi .
Adverbial Clause of Time	Indicates when the action occurs.	Wiwona mwana wabengua meso... ; Mundu wa nyumba ukawoka kuwona gheko malagho ghawuabonyeka iji wafuma ; Baada yeja nyalo yerekoghe isingie nandighi wikawoka kusarigha mpira ghwawo.
Comparative (Simile) Clause	Expresses comparison or similarity.	Ukashalika na kuenda mbeonyi sa nyonyi ; Weke aboo webusa ngemi seji wafuilwa ni mundu wa kichuku chawo ; Nachoka sa choka ya chokwa .
Locative Clause	Indicates the place where the action occurs.	Omerie kumanya andu wana wiendaa daya machi ; Ndekudimagha kukaria andu mwai wapo wachilu ukariagha .

Concessive Clause	Expresses contrast despite the circumstance stated.	Hata iruwa jikabia saki ndeiomagha na ndeipatagha mruke; Hata ngera saki kizungu ndechidimagha kutumika kwa mbari ringi ra masanga mazima....
Nominal (Content) Clause	Functions as the subject, object, or complement of the main clause.	Ishiniko derejiwonieghe ni warika widelemwa nikutumbulia makotio ; Kufuma wuya ghoandika ghungirie Dawida na jingi ndechiandikilo chuo chingi chiko na malagho na maza ra Kidawida...

Subordinate Clauses as Thematic and Rhematic Elements

The study analyzed how themes and rhemes shape meaning as well as the role of subordinate clauses in discourse organization. The analysis focused on the placement, the relation to main clauses, and the contribution to the cohesion and the coherence. Example 1 below served as the basis for discussion.

Kidawida: Firimbi yechakabwa eri nyamandu rilole chia yepata machi.

Interlinear Gloss: Firimbi (whistle) ye (it) cha (was)kabwa (blown) eri (so that) nyamandu (animals) ri (they) lole (look for) chia (ways) ye (of) pata (getting) machi (water)

Free translation: A whistle was blown so that all animals could meet to discuss how to get water.

In example 1, the subordinate clause (eri nyamandu rilole chia yepata machi “so that the animals could look for ways of getting water”) functions as the rheme. It extends the message by adding new information that clarifies the purpose of the action. This is presented in table 5.2.

Table 5.2: Subordinate Clause in Thematic–Rhematic Structure

Kidawida Text	Interlinear Gloss	Clause Type	Thematic / Rhematic Role
Firimbi yechakabwa	Firimbi (whistle) ye (it) cha (was) kabwa (blown)	Main clause	Theme → introduces the event and provides the starting point of the message.
eri nyamandu rilole chia yepata machi	Eri (so that) nyamandu (animals) ri (they) lole (look for) chia (ways) ye (of) pata (getting) machi (water)	Subordinate purpose clause	Rheme → supplies new information by specifying the purpose of the action.

Table 5.2 illustrates how subordinate clauses in Kidawida operate as rhematic elements, carrying the informational load of the clause complex. Within the framework of the textual metafunction in Systemic Functional Grammar, the main clause realizes the theme, serving as the point of departure for the message, while the subordinate clause realizes the rheme, introducing new or elaborative information that develops the text. Consequently, distribution of theme and rheme contribute to structured flow of meaning instead of the simple stringing together of the ideas.

The existence of subordinate clause in the rheme position ensures cohesion and coherence. The theme anchors the discourse through central action whereas the rheme offers explanation. This thematic–rhematic progression results into a natural information flow. In this case, what is expected is first introduced then followed by what is contextually important. This results into a grammatically correct and textually effective message. In line with textual metafunction, this kind of structuring demonstrates hierarchical relationship between the clauses. The subordinate

clauses are grammatically dependent and the discourse is advanced by their rhematic placement. In Kidawida, the subordination plays the role of organizing information to unfold meaning orderly in an interpretable sequence.

Additionally, the subordinate clauses are deployed as rhematic elements to manage emphasis and focus in a text. This guides the listener to the core event (theme) and then to the supporting rationale (rheme). This is in consistent with textual metafunction whose function is to offer clarity and cohesion in a message. This finding is in agreement with [10], who explains that clauses entail fundamental units which transmits information, pose questions, and issue directives. Consequently, their communicative values are shaped through context as well as the intention of the speaker. The current study further found that through subordinate clauses, there is unity in a discours, negotiation of the distribution of given and new information, and sustainability of logical progression. This is demonstrated further with Example 2.

Kidawida: Iji kwabonya bidii, kuidagha mtihani-mine

Interlinear Gloss: Iji (if) kwa (you) bonya (work) bidi (hard), ku (you) ida (pass) gha (future tense) mtihani (exams)

Free translation: If you work hard, you will pass exams

As shown in example 2, the main clause (kuidagha mtihani “you will pass exams”) function as a rheme to give new information, completing meaning of the sentence. The listener receives the premise (theme) and then the conclusion (rheme) as presented in table 5.3.

Table 5.3: Kidawida Subordinate Clause Structure Analysis

Segment	Gloss	Clause Type	Thematic / Rhematic Role
Iji kwabonya bidii	if you work hard	Subordinate conditional clause	Theme → frames the condition that sets the context for interpretation.
kuidagha mtihani	you will pass exams	Main clause	Rheme → supplies the new information as the outcome of the condition.

Table 5.3 indicates how Kidawida subordinate clauses function as thematic elements. The thematic elements offer orientation to unfold the rest of the message. For instance, the conditional clause Iji kwabonya bidii, kuidagha mtihani (If you work hard, you will pass exams) exhibits a subordinate clause Iji kwabonya bidii (if you work hard) initially at the sentence. As indicated in textual metafunction, this clause realizes the theme of the clause complex by establishing the conditional framework against which the main clause must be interpreted. This offers ground for the principal information.

In the main clause kuidagha mtihani (you will pass exams), is the rheme. This is positioned at the tail end of the sentence to introduce new and important information. The outcome is seen in the condition. This reveals that thematic-rhematic structure of subordinate clauses are common in Kidawida discourse. Advertently, a subordinate clause functions to foreground conditions whereas a main clause provide central message. This makes the sentence to have cohesion and coherence in giving a contextual information which builds on a new content.

The conjunction iji (if) is a cohesive device which indicates logical relationship between the two provided clauses. Precenting the subordinate clause as thematic indicates the required effort and the hard work as interpretive context for proceeding proposition. The listener gets the outcome as informed by the condition established already. This structure textual because it presents a balanced information between given and new elements.

Additionally, this kind of organization indicates a communicative goal embedded in advisory or instructional discourse. Foregrounding the condition to provide the main message in a rhematic position, enables speakers to emphasize on the desired outcome. This ensures that communicative purpose on reinforcing effort and success is achieved. This indicates that Kidawida subordinate clauses manages emphasis and focus in a discourse.

The subordinate clauses placed in thematic positions orientate, establish logical connections, and also offer ground for central message. On the other hand, main clause placed in the position of the rheme advances discourse, presenting new information. This demonstrates the function of subordination as envisaged in textual metafunction of SFG. Subordinate clauses structure information for coherent and persuasive flow.

Foreground and Background of Subordination

As explained in textual metafunction tenet of SFG, to foreground means fronting information with significant information. On the other hand, backgrounding means to place supporting details in a lesser prominent position. Placement and function of Kidawida subordinate clauses in relation to main clauses enables speakers and writers to shape rhythm of the discourse as indicated in example 3.

Kidawida: Mundu wa nyumba ukawoka kuwona gheko malagho ghawuabonyeka iji whafuma.

Interlinear Gloss: Mundu (person) wa (of) nyumba (house) u (he/she) ka (ed) woka (start) ku (to) wona (see) gheko (there is) malagho (some issues) ghe (that)ko(were)bonyeka(happening) iji(when) wha(they) fuma (go out of)

Free translation: The owner of the house started noticing mysterious occurrences when he was away

In example 3, the subordinate temporal clause iji whafuma (when he was away) is at the backgrounded. This offers a circumstantial frame situating main clause temporally without compete informational weight. This functions as supportive to explain conditions for the occurrence of the mysterious events. This makes the foreground clause prominent by enriching the interpretation as shown in table 5.4.

Table 5.4: Foregrounding and Backgrounding through Subordination

Segment	Interlinear Gloss	Clause Type	Textual (Foregrounding/Backgrounding) Role
Mundu wa nyumba ukawoka kuwona gheko malagho ghawuabonyeka	person of house he-start to-see there-is some issues that-were-happening	Main clause	Foregrounded → carries the central action and primary message of the sentence.
iji whafuma	when they went-out	Subordinate temporal clause	Backgrounded → provides circumstantial detail that situates the main action but does not carry the primary informational load.

Table 5.4 show how clause complex in Kidawida employ subordination for the balancing of a foreground and background. Main clause entails communicative nucleus of a message. It exhibits central action which is mysterious occurrences. This foregrounds the key information to advance the discourse. This makes the sentence to have a communicative purpose. In contrast, the subordinate temporal clause iji whafuma (when he was away) get backgrounded to become supportive.

This adds circumstantial information to situate mysterious occurrences in a temporal frame. As envisaged in a textual metafunction tenet, the backgrounding clarifies conditions where the main action unfolds. The subordinating marker

iji (when) demonstrates this relationship by indicating the dependence of the clause on the main proposition grammatically and textually.

Using subordination for foregrounding and backgrounding ensures coherent flow of information, distinguishing between core message and its contextual environment. The attention of the hearer is first drawn to the main clause delivering the key information. Subordinate clause becomes secondary by enriching the message without losing its central focus.

This reflects the principle of information envisaged textual metafunction tenet of SFG. By relegating temporal clause to the background, the speaker focuses on the experience of the unusual events, constituting the narrative and informational core. This observation aligns with [11], who indicates that clause complexes are constructed through parataxis and hypotaxis to enhance textual cohesion which supports the logical progression of ideas.

The current study further found that the temporal frame is an important contextual element. However, it is deliberately subordinated to avoid competing with the main action. This reveals that subordination in Kidawida sustains a hierarchy of information, by embedding rich contextual detail while remaining thematically focused.

By and large, speakers manipulate clause order and dependency to reinforce central message which is foregrounded in the main clause. Further, temporal setting is attached to the background. In some contexts, the reverse does occur, where a subordinate clause is fronted for thematic point of departure in the given conditions or circumstances. This flexibility demonstrates the versatility of subordination in Kidawida to achieve coherence, emphasis, and interpretive clarity of a discourse as shown in example 4.

Kidawida: Baada yeleta vala kwa wundu iyo nyalo yerekoghe isingie nandighi wikawoka kusarigha mpira ghwawo.

Interlinear Gloss: Baada (after) ye (-ing) ja (eat) nyalo (meat) ye (it) rekoghe (was) isingie (tasty) nandighi (too) wi (they) ka (ed) woka (start) ku (to) sarigha (play) mpira (ball) ghwawo (their)

Free translation: After eating the tasty meat, they started playing their ball.

Example 4 shows that the subordinate clause Baada yeleta vala kwa wundu iyo nyalo yerekoghe isingie nandighi (After eating the tasty meat) appears at the initial part of the sentence. This assigns it a thematic function due to fronting. The clause draws attention to the circumstance where the main action gets unfolded.

This initial placement reinforces textual salience which shapes how the subsequent clause is interpreted. The clause provides background information to support interpretive frame in which the main process is given. This organization of the flow of information influences the audience's orientation before introducing the main event. This is presented in table 5.5.

Table 5.5: Subordinate Foregrounding/Backgrounding Clause Structure Analysis

Segment	Interlinear Gloss	Clause Type	Textual Role (Foregrounding/Backgrounding)
Baada yeleta vala kwa wundu iyo nyalo yerekoghe isingie nandighi	after eating meat, it was tasty too	Subordinate temporal clause	Foregrounded → functions as the thematic point of departure, situating the main action.
wikawoka kusarigha mpira ghwawo	they started to play their ball	Main clause	Rheme → carries the new information, presenting the actual event.

In table 5.5, Kidawida subordinate clause Baada yeleta vala kwa wundu iyo nyalo yerekoghe isingie nandighi (After eating the tasty meat) appears at the beginning to assume thematic position. This placement at the front makes the clause have textual prominence. This ensures that the hearer processes subsequent main clause against the already established backdrop of the circumstance.

This foregrounding orientates the hearer when the main action unfolded. It makes the speaker to situate the information within a preceding activity. The sequencing of the clauses makes the action of playing the ball meaningful in a recognizable context. The foregrounding further allows a speaker to manipulate an emphasis to shift the focus to the contextual material before the introduction of the main proposition. The main clause wikawoka kusarigha mpira ghwawo (they started playing their ball) have the rhematic burden of new information which is interpreted through the thematic prominence of subordinate clause.

When a subordinate clause is thematically foregrounded, it guides the hearer to the temporal frame before the presentation of the subsequent action. As noted in the textual metafunction of SFG, these contrasting examples indicate flexibility of the subordination in Kidawida discourse. The functions Subordinate clauses depend on the placement and discourse strategy.

Interaction with Cohesive Devices

Cohesion is the linguistic aspect in which clauses and sentences get linked to flow for continuity. In this study, attention was given to how subordinate clauses relate to markers and lexical cohesion. The analysis explored how subordination knit different parts of the text together to connect ideas for coherence and progression as shown in example 5.

Kidawida: Kufuma wuya ghoandika ghungirie Dawida na jingi ndechiandikilo chuo chingi chiko na malagho na maza ra kidawida ra kufuma kokala sa agha anduangi

Interlinear Gloss: Kufuma (since) wuya (skills) gho (of) Andika (writing) ghungirie (came in/was introduced in) Dawida (Taita) na (there has) jingi (never) ndechiandikilo chuo chingi chiko na malagho na maza ra kidawida ra kufuma kokala sa agha anduangi Free translation: Since writing was introduced, there has never been any book written about early customs of Taita

In the above example, the conjunction kufuma (since) ties the two ideas together to enable logical flow and progression. This connective element allows a relationship between the introduction of writing and the absence of texts on Taita customs. The clause complex in Kidawida illustrates the interaction of subordination with cohesive devices as presented in table 5.6.

Table 5.6: Clause Structure and Cohesive Interaction

Clause Segment	Interlinear Gloss	Clause Type	Cohesive Device	Textual Role
Kufuma wuya ghoandika ghungirie Dawida	since skills of writing came in Taita	Subordinate clause (temporal–causal)	Conjunction (kufuma “since”)	Provides temporal and causal frame.
na jingi ndechiandikilo chuo chingi chiko na malagho na maza ra kidawida ra kufuma kokala sa agha anduangi	there has never been any book written about early customs of the Taita	Main clause	Lexical cohesion (repetition of cultural reference: malagho “customs”, maza “traditions”)	States the core proposition,

Table 5.6 show how Kidawida subordination operates in a network of cohesive resources. The subordinate clause Kufuma wuya ghoandika ghungirie Dawida (Since writing was introduced in Taita) demonstrates thematic point of departure. The placement at the beginning signals condition for which the claim in the main clause is understood. The subordinating conjunction kufuma (since) shows temporal-causal relationship. This knits the subordinate clause to the main clause, guiding the hearer towards a coherent interpretation. This cohesive device connects the historical introduction of writing and the current-day absence of books about customs.

The connective na jingi (there has) connects main clause to the subordinate clause. This demonstrates a chaining device for smooth textual progression. The reference to malaghon (customs) and maza (traditions) provide parallelism to tighten the unity of the discourse. This expands the theme of cultural heritage, serving as lexical ties to bind the clause internally. It also links it to tradition and identity discourse. As envisaged in textual metafunction tenet of SFG, the conjunction kufuma (since) links the clauses whereas na jingi (there has) reveals the clause ordering. The clause ordering shape thematic progression where the subordinate clause frames the discourse as context and the main clause offer new information as rheme. The repetition and clustering of customs and traditions indicate continuity which reinforces thematic unity of the proposition.

This multi-layered interaction demonstrates how Kidawida subordinate clauses work actively with cohesive devices in structuring the discourse. These cohesive devices provide interpretive frames, link ideas logically, and reinforce unity. This finding is in agreement with [12], who argue that subordination markers contribute to cohesion when dependent ideas are linked to main clauses. The current study found that foregrounding the subordinate clause indicates the control of rhythm of the discourse by the speakers. This ensures that the hearer encounters the historical condition first before processing the current-day evaluation.

Kidawida uses subordination as a textual strategy by integrating the subordinate clauses with conjunctions, lexical repetition, and clause sequencing. This enables the speakers to obtain both coherence (logical connectedness) and cohesion (surface linguistic ties). The result is a discourse unfolding smoothly to balance context with content. Example 6 is used for further illustration.

Kidawida: Ukashalika na kuenda mbeonyi sa nyonyi

Interlinear Gloss: U (he) ka (past tense) Shalika (fly) na (and) kuenda (went) mbeo (air) nyi (into) sa (like) nyonyi (a bird)

Free interpretation: He flew in the air like a bird Kidawida: Ukashalika na kuenda mbeonyi sa nyonyi

The subordinate clause sa nyonyi (like a bird) plays the role of an adverb of manner which is introduced by the comparative marker sa (like/as). In this case, cohesion is achieved by comparison. The flying experience is clarified and intensified via a reference to a familiar image (a bird in flight). This enables the hearer to connect the described action to a vivid natural reference as illustrated in table 5.7.

Clause Segment	Gloss	Clause Type	Cohesive Device	Textual Role
Ukashalika na kuenda mbeonyi	he flew and went into the air	Main clause	Conjunction (na “and”)	States the primary action
sa nyonyi	like a bird	Subordinate comparative clause (adverbial of manner)	Simile marker (sa “like/as” → cohesive comparison)	Provides descriptive cohesion by linking the action to a familiar image

Table 5.7: Clause Structure and Cohesive Interaction

Table 5.7 presents the interaction of subordinate clauses in Kidawida with cohesive devices to emphasize on comparison and analogy. The main clause Ukashalika na kuenda mbeonyi (He flew and went into the air) offers thematic foundation for essential action. The conjunction na (and) in addition to the two verbal processes cohesively presents a coordinated sequence. The subordinate clause sa nyonyi (like a bird) plays the role of an adverb of manner.

The comparative marker sa (like/as) offer a cohesive relation of similarity between a human subject and a bird. This comparison places the action in a familiar frame of reference to guide interpretation in connection to a culturally salient image. The subordinate clause adds descriptive detail and makes the action vivid to the hearer. According to textual metafunction, this comparative marker outlines the flexibility of Kidawida subordination. The main clause provides the theme–rheme core whereas the subordinate clause reinforces the rheme to extend the informational load.

The application of cohesion through comparison enables narrative and descriptive discourse. When the action is linked to a known image (nyonyi – “bird”), the rhetorical device that enhances clarity and expressiveness is introduced by the speaker. The cohesive tie by sa (like) syntactically marks dependency between clauses to establish a bridge of meaning. This makes the message logically connected and textually coherent.

Comparative Subordination and Cohesion

The analysis of textual metafunction of subordinate clauses in Kidawida focused on how subordination interacts with with cohesive strategies such as comparison and analogy. The Subordinate clauses are introduced by comparative markers to contribute to cohesion beyond sequencing or conditionality. This provides alternative pathways to linking ideas and enriching the texture of discourse. The Provided data demonstrates how textual organization in subordinate clauses clarify manner, intensify imagery, and contribute to the interpretability of discourse as shown in example 7.

Kidawida: Nachoka sa choka ya chokwa

Interlinear Gloss: Na (I am) choka (tired) sa (like) choka (snake) ya (of) chokwa (white)

Free translation: Iam tired like a white snake

It is evident in example 7 that there is an introduction of subordinate clause through the use of comparative marker sa (like/as). The marker plays a role of a cohesive device for similarity. This provides a vivid analogy to the rheme, aligning the speaker’s fatigueness to white snake. The repetition of choka (tired/snake) leads to a phonological and echo which ties the two clauses as indicated in table 5.8.

Table 5.8: Clause Segmentation and Cohesive Devices

Clause Segment	Gloss	Clause Type	Cohesive Device	Textual Role
Nachoka	I am tired	Main clause	Lexical cohesion (choka)	Provides the thematic starting point (theme)
sa choka ya chokwa	like a white snake	Comparative subordinate clause	Simile marker (sa)	Expands the rheme with analogy

Table 5.8 indicates that the comparative subordination in Kidawida functions to organize discourse textually. The main clause Nachoka (I am tired) serves a thematic starting point. It demonstrates the speaker’s state as a theme of the utterance which presents key information anchoring the message.

The subordinate clause *sa choka ya chokwa* (like a white snake) functions as an adverb of manner which expands the rheme through a comparative image. The marker *sa* (like/as) creates cohesion between the two clauses to reinforce the interpretive link of the speaker's tiredness and the simile qualifying it. This reduces ambiguity since the cohesive device ties the meaning of the subordinate clause to the main clause.

As envisaged in textual metafunction tenet, the subordinate clauses in Kidawida enrich rhemes. The initial clause introduces a theme-rheme unit (I am tired) whereas the subordinate clause expands this by providing new meaning to make the message elaborate and vivid. This causes the core information to expand with an explanatory detail. This finding supports [4] who examine how clauses are framed to function in context. The current study further finds that subordinate clauses in Kidawida ensures clarity to allow the speaker emphasize the expression.

The repetition of the root *choka* (tired) in the main clause and then as a snake in the subordinate clause creates a phonological link. The two versions of *choka* differ in meaning but their repetition offers an echo effect to reinforce textual unity. This lexical cohesion indicates that Kidawida speakers employs the flexibility of their lexicon to connect clauses together beyond syntax to create the rhythm and memorability of a discourse.

Advertently, the use of an imagery of the white snake creates cultural resonance. The speaker aligns fatigue with the image of a white snake to convey unusual quality of tiredness. The subordinate clause therefore enriches the rheme textually and introduces a cultural metaphor at the same time to enhance interpretability. This demonstrates that Kidawida subordinate clauses act as versatile textual resources to maintain coherence and also function as a rhetorical depth. This is further demonstrated in example 8.

Kidawida: *Weke aboo webusa ngemi seji wafuilwa ni mundu wa kichuku chawo*

Interlinear Gloss: *Weke* (the) *aboo* (men) *we* (they) *busa ngemi* (scream) *seji* (as if) *wa* (they) *fuilwa* (have lost) *ni* (by) *mundu* (person) *wa* (of) *kichuku*(relative) *chawo*(their)

Free translation: The men screamed as if they had lost their relatives.

The subordinate clause in example 8 is introduced by *seji* (as if) to expand the rheme through an analogy. This comparative marker functions as a cohesive link to connect the intensity of the men's shouting to a salient experience culturally. The grief is related to losing a relative. This enhances interpretability as it presents the action emotionally in a social frame be related to easily as presented in table 5.9.

Table 5.9: Clause Structure and Cohesive Interaction

Clause Segment	Gloss	Clause Type	Cohesive Device	Textual Role
<i>Weke aboo webusa ngemi</i>	The men screamed loudly	Main clause	Lexical cohesion (repetition of noun phrase <i>weke aboo</i>)	Provides theme and central action
<i>seji wafuilwa ni mundu wa kichuku chawo</i>	as if they had lost a relative	Comparative subordinate clause	Comparative marker <i>seji</i> (as if)	Expands rheme with analogy, intensifying the main action

In table 5.9, the Kidawida subordinate clause is demonstrated as creating cohesion by sequencing information leading to analogical ties. The marker *seji* (as if) cohesively connects the main and subordinate clauses to signal the relationship of comparison. This cohesive marker makes the subordinate clause to enrich the rheme through an evaluative dimension.

As suggested in textual metafunction of SFG, the main clause offers the theme-rheme nucleus whereas the subordinate clause reinforces the meaning. The hearer processes the event (men screaming) before interpreting its magnitude and emotional tone using mourning analogy. This organization leads to coherence since the subordinate clause offers an interpretive frame to clarify the significance of the action.

There is also evidence of lexical cohesion through the repetition of *mundu wa kichuku chawo* (a relative of theirs). This reinforces cultural context of kinship ties central to Taita social life. This finding is in support of [3] who presents the functional approach to language, emphasizing its role as a strategic, meaning-making resource within systemic linguistics. In the current study, the lexical choice ensures that the analogy resonates strongly, grounding the subordinate clause in shared cultural values.

When viewed alongside earlier example, the current clause shows the versatility of comparative subordination in Kidawida. While both use analogy for cohesion, this example emphasizes social and emotional resonance (grief), whereas the other highlight physical description (fatigue). Together, they demonstrate that subordinate clauses in Kidawida interact dynamically with cohesive devices to produce discourse that is not only structurally connected but also richly expressive and culturally meaningful.

Contribution of Subordination to Overall Textual Organization

In Systemic Functional Grammar framework, textual metafunction explains how language resources are used to create coherent and cohesive discourse. In Kidawida, subordination functions together with other grammatical and lexical resources for overall textual fabric. The placement, type, and function of subordinate clauses shape the sequencing of information, the distribution of emphasis, and the logical progression of a discourse.

The analysis of data in the current study focused on the textual contribution of subordinate clauses to message organization, for discourse cohesion and coherence. Example 9 is one of the data analyzed for discussion.

Kidawida: *Ichija chiko andenyi ndechifumagha shighadi.*

Interlinear Gloss: *Ichija* (what) *chiko* (is) *andenyi* (inside) *nde* (does not) *chi* (it) *fumagha* (come out) *shighadi* (outside)

Free translation: What is inside does not come outside

Example 9 is a subordinate clause introduced using *ichija* (what) to function as a grammatical subject of the sentence. It takes the role of theme in textual organization. The main clause offers the rheme to state what happens to the entity in the subordinate clause.

The subordinate clause shapes the discourse as anchored in textual cohesion. The sentence foregrounds the notion of what is inside to make it a point of departure, by making the embedded clause the subject. This contributes to thematic prominence which guides the hearer's attention to a conceptual space inside-outside before the restriction specified by the rheme.

Referential ties further support cohesion as seen in the subject of the subordinate clause *ichija chiko andenyi* (what is inside) which is referenced in the main clause using the pronominal prefix *chi-* (it). This prefix plays the role of a cohesive device as it links the two parts of the sentence structure. The linking ensures that referential chain of the two clauses is interpreted as tightly bound parts of a single message as shown in table 5.10.

Table 5.10: Clause Segmentation and Textual Roles

Clause Segment	Gloss	Clause Type	Textual Role
Ichija chiko andenyi	what is inside	Subordinate (nominal clause)	Functions as theme of the main clause
nde-chi-fumagha shighadi	it does not come outside	Main clause	Provides rheme, elaborating on the theme

Table 5.10 indicates how Kidawida subordinate clauses goes beyond syntactic embedding to function as textual devices. For instance, the subordinate clause Ichija chiko andenyi (what is inside) functions as a theme, structuring the sentence to establish the informational point of departure in the utterance. The nominal clause in the thematic position is embedded for the speaker to elevate it from background information, to a central textual position where the discourse revolves.

As explained in the textual metafunction, this kind of subordination reflects a managing of information flow strategy. The subordinate clause functions as an abstract thematic framework. The main clause nde-chi-fumagha shighadi (does not come outside) acts as a rheme to elaborate on the restriction placed on the theme. This theme–rheme distribution demonstrates the function of subordination in organizing the message for the listener orient to the notion of what is inside before processing the constraint it is associated with. This structuring creates coherence to avoid abrupt transitions that might happen if the clauses were organized in a coordinate form.

Referential continuity reinforces the cohesion. This is in agreement with [3] who suggest that grammatical structures have constituents which are defined by both class and function, in which the class refers to a group sharing features and function refers to the role a class member play. In the current study, the pronoun prefix chi- (it) in the main clause picks up the subject of the subordinate clause, creating a link between theme and rheme. This referential chain exemplifies how Kidawida leverages morphological resources to tie subordinate and main clauses together, making the discourse more compact and unified. Without this cohesive tie, the relationship between the two clauses could appear more distant, reducing clarity.

At the discourse level, this type of construction allows for the articulation of general truths, proverbial wisdom, or culturally grounded maxims. The sentence functions as a proverbial to present a general principle on concealment of hidden matters. This indicates that the textual strategies of subordination in Kidawida are cultural tools used to package values memorably. The subordinate clause offers the thematic premise whereas the main clause provides the commentary which results in a structured textual unit to resonate logically and socially.

Unlike the previous examples analyzed, this construction differs in its function as a subordination to create thematic prominence rather than cause kufuma (since) or analogy sa (like) and seji (as if). The causal and comparative subordination expands the rheme with conditions, reasons, or descriptive analogies. Nominal subordination expands the theme itself. This indicates the flexibility of Kidawida subordination in textual organization to either enrich what is already given (rhematic expansion) or provide the stage for interpretation (thematic anchoring). This is illustrated further in example 10.

Kidawida: Ndekudimagha kukaria andu mwai wapo wachilu ukariagha

Interlinear Gloss: Nde(not)ku(you)dimagha(can) kukaria(sit) andu(where) mwai(girl) wapo(my) wachilu(black) u(she)karia(sit)gha(-s)

Free translation: You cannot sit where my black girl sits

In example 10, the subordinate clause *andu mwai wapo wachilu ukariagha* (where my black girl sits) get introduced using relative marker *andu* (where). This marker signals dependency which ties the subordinate clause to the main clause. The main clause *Ndekudimagha kukaria* (You cannot sit) causes the prohibition as the subordinate clause completes the thought to identify the specific location being restricted. Consequently, the main clause creates restriction as a theme whereas the subordinate clause provides the rheme to add specific information which contextualizes the prohibition. The subordinate clause makes the sentence complete and avoid vagueness. The prohibition is textually cohesive and socially meaningful as presented in table 5.11.

Table 5.10: Clause Segmentation and Textual Roles

Clause Segment	Gloss	Clause Type	Textual Role
Ndekudimagha kukaria	You cannot sit where	Main clause (matrix)	Thematic base introducing prohibition
Andu mwai wapo wachilu ukariagha	my black girl sits	Subordinate relative clause	Rhematic elaboration specifying location

In table 5.11, The subordinate clause *andu mwai wapo wachilu ukariagha* (where my black girl sits) functions to specify the scope of the prohibition. This situates the utterance as culturally charged and contextually significant leading to textual contribution of the structure. The relative marker *andu* plays the role of a cohesive device to link the subordinate clause with the main clause. This reinforces the interpretation of the two propositions as a single coherent unit.

Advertently, the subordinate clause expands the rhematic portion of the sentence. The matrix clause introduces the theme, *Ndekudimagha kukaria* (You cannot sit), to establish the interpersonal stance of prohibition. The subordinate clause supplies the rheme to refine and contextualize the message, indicating the the prohibited location. This reflects the key operation of textual metafunction, envisaging that a text is organized into theme and rheme to ensure logical progression and interpretability.

The use of relative subordinate clauses demonstrates a social norms and values. Prohibiting someone from getting the seat of a girl indicates an expectation of respect and social propriety in the Kidawida community. This finding is in line with [4] who posits that relative clauses functions as modifiers to add descriptive details to nouns. This enhances sentence complexity and cohesion. However, the current study finds that Kidawida subordinate clauses elaborate on the main clauses, exhibiting culturally salient meaning. This demonstrates that Kidawida subordination functions simultaneously as a grammatical and social resource.

CONCLUSIONS

The study shows that Kidawida subordinate clauses are critical in textual metafunction. This is because they contribute to theme–rheme progression, foregrounding and backgrounding, and overall discourse organization. For instance, the subordinate clauses function thematically to serve as points of departure as seen in *ichija chiko andenyi...* (what is inside). They also thematically specify the main clause *ndekudimagha kukaria andu mwai wapo wachilu ukariagha* (You cannot sit where my black girl sits). They were further found to function evaluatively through analogy *Nachoka sa choka ya chokwa* (I am tired like a white snake). These functions demonstrate that subordinate clauses in Kidawida plays the role of achieving coherence and cohesion in a discourse. The focus on the textual metafunction can be a point of reference to develop mechanisms for exploring the discourse functions of syntactic structures in other under-documented languages. This can expand functional linguistic theory to enhance explanation in diverse linguistic contexts.

Declaration of Interest

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